

THE GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918

By
MAJOR-GENERAL
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

IN presenting this short summary of the greatest of wars, the Author wishes to place on record his concurrence with the conviction underlying *The Growth of International Thought* (another volume of this series by F. Melian Stawell) that a sane nationalism, when it understands itself, points the way to internationalism as its completion. To which he would add his belief that in course of time an internationalism based upon sane patriotism will gradually substitute a recourse to law, rather than to force unbridled by reason, by law or by ethics, as the means of settling issues between nations. Forty years' study of the history of wars has convinced him of the futility of force as a means of effecting a permanent settlement of such issues.

At the same time, as long as national Navies, Armies and Air Forces exist, he is a firm believer in their being employed most effectively and in the value of historical experience to those upon whom the responsibility for so doing rests, which means, in democratic countries,

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the civilian statesmen at the head of affairs. To attempt to bring about national disarmament before providing a substitute for war, and *before recourse to that substitute has been proved by experience to be effective*, is, in the opinion of the author, to put the cart before the horse. He has been confirmed in that view by Professor A. F. Pollard's pamphlet *The League of Nations : An Historical Argument* (The Clarendon Press, Oxford), especially by the pages therein (45 to 68) dealing with the lessons taught by history. The Author's views coincide with those expressed in *The Strength of England* (Methuen) by G. S. Bowles, that British Sea Power, during the long period of its predominance when it was applied in accordance with the historical Law and Custom of the Sea, was one of the most potent factors in curbing the lawless "militarism" of Land Powers.

It is necessary, in conclusion, to add a few words about maps and charts. These cannot be appended on an adequate scale to a small work of this nature, and diagrams which ignore topographical obstacles to the movement of land forces are misleading. A good atlas is therefore essential to those who wish to follow the movements of armies, and for detailed study the collection preserved in the Imperial War

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Museum can be recommended. A special war atlas is attached to Lord Edward Gleichen's *Chronology of the War*, referred to in the introductory chapter.

While sea-warfare between surface ships and submarines is adequately dealt with in the British Official Histories, the best account of the revolution created by mine-laying and mine-sweeping in the highways of sea-traffic is to be found in an article on the subject in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 13th Edition, vol. ii, pp. 919–923. The author was Director of Mine-sweeping at the Admiralty from 1917 to 1919.

G. G. A.

WOODFORD,
SALISBURY.
March, 1930.

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THE GREAT WAR

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

HISTORY has been aptly described as "a narrative of events and who or what caused them." In so brief a summary as this of the history of the Great War of 1914-1918, there can be no question of providing more than an outline of the events, by sea, land and air, during that momentous epoch. While some of the operations of the fighting forces can be traced to political, naval, or military authorities who initiated them, it is not possible in so confined a space even to touch upon the controversial question of the causes of the war itself, in so far as these are attributable to the use of words or to underlying tendencies of thought and intention. We shall therefore be concerned most with deeds, with the operations of the fighting forces that struck the blows of which the first made war inevitable by trans-

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ferring the conflict from the sphere of words to that of irrevocable action.

The first blows which converted a conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia into the Great War were struck by Germany. They took the form of crossings of the frontiers of Luxembourg and of France by German troops on Sunday, August 2nd, 1914, followed, early on the morning of Tuesday, August 4th, by the invasion of Belgian territory which led to the immediate participation, with widespread public support, of the British Empire in the conflict. Our principal object will be to study the extent to which the sea, land and air forces of the British Empire contributed to the victory of the Allied and Associated Powers, touching but briefly upon the political, financial, economic, and cognate factors in the great struggle. In so far as reliable data are available, responsibility for individual operations will be traced to the authority which caused them to be undertaken.

Responsibility for supervising the work of all Departments of the Government in preparing for war had been entrusted to a Committee of Imperial Defence, an elastic body of which the nucleus consisted of the Prime Minister, as Chairman, and a permanent Secretariat. The membership was determined from time to time

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by the Chairman. The functions of this body were purely advisory until (as almost invariably happened) their recommendations were given executive force by the Cabinet through the agency of the Government Departments concerned. The greatest achievement in pre-war preparation by the Secretariat of the Committee was the compilation of a "War-Book," which prescribed, after previous consultation with all the parties concerned, the measures for which each Department would be responsible in a precautionary stage and the immediate executive action to be undertaken on the actual outbreak of a war. The system worked well, but the Committee, having been in existence only for a few years, had not undertaken an important branch of war-preparedness, drawing up hypothetical plans of campaign for the use of the fighting forces in all prospective emergencies up to the moment of contact, and keeping those plans up to date.

Then again, no provision had been made for establishing any executive authority, excepting the large Cabinet of twenty-two Ministers, to be responsible for actual war-plans, for the co-ordination of the activities of the sea, land, and air forces, and for their distribution in different theatres of war. The Committee of Imperial Defence itself, even if given executive

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powers, was not suited to the purpose,¹ though its Secretariat was found invaluable by the various bodies which were devised, as the months went by, to deal with higher strategy. During the early months of the war, when only Germany and Austria were included in the Central Power group, the strategical problem was fairly simple, the obvious "objectives" being the sea and land forces of those two Powers. While executive action in the conduct of war operations still rested nominally with what has been lightly styled a "Sanhedrin" of twenty-two Cabinet Ministers, in practice

¹ The Author, who was employed in the Admiralty at the time, wrote in his diary in June 1914: "As regards the Committee of Imperial Defence, I fear it is getting on the wrong lines in some ways. A debating society for politicians, and not a business arrangement. Too many irresponsible members. As regards Naval and Military co-operation, what is now wanted is a joint Committee of Admiralty and War Office *responsible* officers, only calling in the Committee of Imperial Defence when they do not agree." It was not until the year 1926 that this matter was adjusted by the establishment of a Joint Committee of the Chiefs of Staff of the three fighting forces, with most beneficial results. The problem of an executive authority capable of speedy decisions leading to prompt action in time of war still awaits solution, but whatever conclusion may be arrived at, the Joint Committee referred to should prove of great value to that authority.

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that power rested with a small group, with whom some naval and military "experts" were associated with purely advisory powers.¹ There was in addition, early in August 1914, a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence to report to the Prime Minister on all projects for employing British Empire military forces in theatres of war other than France. It was due to the activities of that Sub-Committee that the early operations, using a bare minimum of military force, were carried out against German outlying possessions which contained high-power wireless stations or harbours and facilities for the use of commerce-destroyers. These operations were undertaken in order to help the Navy in commerce protection. The subject of responsibility for war-plans and of executive control will be reverted to in dealing with subsequent events, when due note will be taken of the attitude of the responsible military advisers of the Government who advocated consistently the concentration of the largest possible army in France and Flanders, using a bare minimum to deal with situations in other theatres, while the initiation of offensive cam-

¹ The question whether silence on their part implied consent has been much debated. In their own average view it did not, when Ministers representing their Departments were present.

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paings elsewhere was due to various other influences, chiefly political, either in Great Britain or in Allied countries. The best historical material on this subject is contained in Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson's *Soldiers and Statesmen, 1914-1918*,¹ in which extracts from pertinent official documents are reproduced. The British official histories entitled *Naval Operations*,² *Sea-borne Trade*,³ *The Merchant Navy*,³ *Military Operations (France and Belgium)*,⁴ and *The War in the Air*⁵ are valuable aids to a detailed study of the Great War. Other official volumes on local military campaigns in Mesopotamia,⁶ Gallipoli,⁷ Egypt and Palestine⁶ and elsewhere, are important, and also *The Advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, July 1917 to October 1918*.⁶ *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire, 1914-1918*,⁶ and *Principal Events 1914-1918*⁶ are indispensable to teachers, students and others seeking to form a comprehensive view of events. *The Chronology of the War*, in three small volumes (Constable), by Lord Edward Gleichen,

¹ Pub. Cassell.

² Longmans.

³ Murray.

⁴ Macmillan.

⁵ First volume is by Sir Walter Raleigh (Oxford University Press).

⁶ H.M. Stationery Office.

⁷ Heinemann.

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is invaluable for reference. All operations are briefly recorded in convenient form and the Appendices contain many original documents.

No official explanation is available at the present date for those who seek to understand the policy of dispersion as distinguished from concentration of purpose and of effort to achieve that purpose, which was formerly considered to be the secret of success in warfare as in other forms of human activity. Sir William Robertson, who held the appointment of Chief of the Imperial General Staff, provides the best available summary from the soldiers' point of view. It is advisable in such study to take note of the point that it is a commonplace of military experience that concentration of purpose does not always imply concentration of force. In the words of Jomini ¹: "The operations of the detachments which an army may send out have so important a bearing on the success of a campaign that the duty of determining their strength and proper occasions for them is one of the greatest and most delicate responsibilities imposed upon a commander. [In this example, upon the various political authorities in the United Kingdom to which we have referred.] If nothing is more useful in war than a strong

¹ *The Art of War*. (Translation by Captains Mendell and Craighill of U.S. Army.)

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detachment opportunely sent out and having a good *ensemble* of operations with the main body, it is equally certain that no expedient is more dangerous when inconsiderately adopted." These words contain the essence of the art of military strategy as it was understood in 1914. Writings on the subject are very voluminous, but a convenient *précis* is to be found in the chapter on "Detachments" in Hamley's *Operations of War*.¹

In the actual event, the various executive political bodies who were entrusted in Great Britain with the conduct of military strategy decided, up to the early months of 1918, that the decisive theatre lay in France and Flanders where main German Armies were encountered, so the British Empire Army there employed can justifiably be styled what Jomini in the above quotation calls the "main body" from which it may be desirable to send out detachments under the conditions specified. Some statistics may be of interest in that connexion. The maximum strength in military personnel of the "detachments" amounted to 1,718,908, while the maximum strength of the British Empire Army in France reached 2,046,901. The "Total employed" figures amounted respectively to 3,576,391 and 5,399,563.² Although

¹ Seventh Edition, 1923, p. 411 (Blackwood), *q.v.*

² *Statistics of Military Effort*, p. 739.

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no official material is available to explain the extent to which these detachments had "a good *ensemble* of operations with the main body," much has been written by their originators and by others to justify them as individual efforts, especially for political as distinguished from military reasons. For example: preventing Bulgaria from joining the Central Powers, freeing the southern ports of Russia, causing a diversion of the Austrian war effort, or keeping Greece on the side of the Allies. On the other hand, we have the statement by Lord Grey of Fallodon, who was Foreign Secretary during the period when most of the detachments were made, that: "The chief mistakes in strategy may, in my opinion, be summarised in two words: 'Side shows.'"¹ Writings by other statesmen to justify the "side-shows" which they initiated (on the plea of important political or military advantage) are of little value—except as evidence of the influence of strong personalities in high place over war strategy—because no account is taken therein of the military resources that were available to achieve the intended purpose at the time.

Reference to the idea of concentration of purpose leads us naturally to the utility or otherwise of what are commonly called "Prin-

¹ *Twenty-five Years*, Vol. II, pp. 71-72.

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ciples of War." These have well been defined as "Warnings, never Rules" in the conduct of warfare, which is neither a science nor an art. It can better be compared with other forms of conflict between human interests such as business competition, or to State policy, which may perhaps in these days be also looked upon as a form of business competition on a large scale. [Clausewitz.] It is in State policy that wars have been said to originate, in so far as they do so from the action of Government and diplomatists, and not (as in some countries) from popular movements engineered or encouraged by other authorities such as heavily subsidized sections of the Press.

The late Marshal Foch, one of the deepest thinkers and most successful exponents of land warfare in modern times, held in his days of academic study and teaching that theory in war started from certain principles such as those of economy of forces, of maintaining freedom of action, of the free disposal of forces, of security and so forth, but even in those days he resented reliance upon what he called "mere learning or filling the mind with a number of new and certain truths." With Napoleon, he accentuated the importance of execution—of action, to which "mere learning" seldom leads men of studious temperaments. Apart from

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the influence of his character and personality, Foch's pre-eminence as a leader and adviser in land warfare lay in the mental attitude embodied in his accustomed phrase "*De quoi s'agit-il?*" —What is the definite problem? In solving that problem, whether great or small, he sought for no precedents or "principles." The matter was one for his own judgment, and that judgment had been trained through long years of disciplined study of the experience of others, especially of the causes of their failures as set forth in the historical material which had been at his disposal. Such failures he looked upon, in the metaphor of the navigator, simply as beacons to warn him off dangerstonavigation, and he recommended others to follow his example.

When passing, in the chapters which follow, from principles to practice, we will follow that advice. The incidents of the Great War will be described in chronological order, first touching upon the system at force at the time for controlling the sea, land and air forces of the British Empire and then describing very briefly the operations in which they were engaged, either singly or in co-operation with Allied forces. It will be essential to make some references to the political, economic, and financial conditions which influenced the operations of the fighting forces.

CHAPTER II

1914

CONTROL—NAVAL OPERATIONS—MILITARY OPERATIONS—WAR IN THE AIR—POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS—SUMMARY.

Control

THE general control over war operations that were undertaken by the forces of the British Empire in the year 1914 has been described in the previous chapter.

In the distribution of the sea forces the First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Winston Churchill) exercised powers similar to those wielded by the Admiral, Lord Barham; who occupied that office in 1805. Like Barham, he issued orders to Admirals with his own hand. [See *The World Crisis*.] Responsibility for the distribution of the principal land forces, under the direction of the Cabinet, was divided between the Secretary of State for War (Lord Kitchener), the India Office, the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief in India, and the Indian Government.

Naval Operations in 1914

The British Navy was faced with the new problem of dealing with a first-class Naval Power, Germany, based to the northward of the defile formed by the Straits of Dover. Previous experience since the Dutch wars of the seventeenth century had been built up against enemies lying to the southward, and the fleet-bases had been distributed geographically on the result of that experience, while at the same time changes in the construction and motive power of war vessels had made them increasingly dependent upon secure bases for fuel and for equipment, replenishment and repair. There was no dry-dock capable of accommodating a capital ship between the Medway and the Clyde, passing north-about round Scotland, excepting one privately-owned dock in the Tyne. A recent decision by the Government that the use of northern bases would be necessary in the event of war with Germany had not resulted in the provision of such bases, for lack of the necessary financial provision. Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands, considered to be the most suitable initial base for the Grand Fleet, possessed neither repairing facilities nor protection worthy of the name, and only improvised defences, recently con-

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structed, were in existence at Cromarty (Invergordon). Germany, as the weaker sea-power, had provided well-equipped and elaborately defended naval bases both in the North Sea and in the Baltic, and the sea-canal connecting the principal harbours in the two seas had recently been deepened to allow the passage of the heaviest capital ships. A glance at a small-scale chart shows that on the other side of the balance (favouring the British Navy) only two routes, from the Baltic through the Skaggerak or from the mouth of the Elbe into the North Sea and thence through the "broad and stormy outlet between Scotland and Norway" or through the landlocked Dover channel, enabled German war vessels to obtain access to the ocean. The Navy of Germany's Ally, Austria-Hungary, had no outlet to the Mediterranean excepting through the narrow waters of the Adriatic, and, taking the world situation as a whole, the enemies of the Central Powers possessed great advantages in the possession of what Admiral Mahan styled "positions suitably chosen and spaced from one another, upon which as bases a navy rests, and from which it can exert its strength."

The naval situation affecting the principal sea-forces at daybreak on August 4th (when the German Army was crossing the Belgian

frontier) was that the bulk of the British Grand Fleet ¹ under Sir John Jellicoe was at Scapa Flow. A southern force of destroyers under Commodore Tyrwhitt and of submarines under Commodore Roger Keyes remained at Harwich ; it was under the direct order of the Admiralty from August 9th. Jellicoe's object, explained to the Admiralty and approved officially, was to bring about a fleet action, if possible, in the northern portion of the North Sea, where the Germans would not be able to make the most effective use of the submarines, mines, torpedoes and aircraft upon which, as the weaker Power, they were expected to rely. The German High Seas Fleet ² under Admiral von Ingenohl was concentrated in the North Sea bases south of Heligoland. The object in German strategy, as had been anticipated by Jellicoe, was to make the fullest use of the weapons referred to and to reduce the strength of the Grand Fleet by a process of attrition until the balance was sufficiently adjusted to offer hope of success in a general fleet action. The defence of communi-

¹ Twenty-nine battleships with 5 light cruisers in attendance, and a cruiser force (Sir David Beatty) of 4 battle-cruisers, 8 armoured cruisers, and 6 light cruisers.

² Twenty-three battleships and an attached cruiser force (Hipper) of 5 battle-cruisers and 6 light cruisers.

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cations in certain maritime regions, called in popular language "command of the sea," was a condition essential to the victory of the Allied Powers. Their military forces must be able to cross the sea without prohibitive risk and they must subsequently be provided with supplies, munitions, and reinforcements. The nations themselves required sea-borne food, raw materials and manufactured articles. Maritime control was also needed to prevent the movement by sea (for instance, for the invasion of Great Britain) of hostile troops and, as far as might be possible, to cut off from the Central Powers the flow of munitions, food and merchandise essential to the conduct of warfare.

The Grand Fleet put to sea on August 4th to 7th and on other occasions, the High Seas Fleet remaining under the protection of its defences. The main incidents in the North Sea in 1914 were, first and foremost, the laying of submarine mines in the highways of sea traffic by the Germans in contravention of agreements at The Hague in 1907, thus obstructing the commerce of all nations, and the reply on October 7th of the British Admiralty which took the form of laying a minefield in the Channel, announcing its position as a warning to neutrals. From August 11th a cruiser squadron under Rear-Admiral De Chair relieved

the Grand Fleet of the responsibility for watching the Northern Approaches between Scotland and Norway. On August 28th occurred the Battle of Heligoland Bight, in which British light cruisers and destroyers, supported by Beatty's battle-cruisers, sunk three German cruisers (*Maintz, Koln, and Ariadne*). On November 3rd German cruisers bombarded Yarmouth. On December 16th they bombarded Hartlepool, Whitby and Scarborough, and escaped on both occasions. By the end of the year the British lost the battleships *Audacious* (sunk by a mine) and *Bulwark* (blown up in the Medway), and the *Conqueror* and *Monarch* were put out of action for the time being as the result of a collision. The British also lost by mines the *Amphion* and *Speedy*, and, by the activity of German submarines, the cruisers *Pathfinder, Cressy, Aboukir, Hogue, Hawke*, and the *Hermes* and *Niger*. The Germans lost the cruiser *Hela* (sunk by submarine) and 4 destroyers. Between October 18th and 21st, British monitors co-operated with the Allied Army on the Yser, and on Christmas Day British airmen, supported by cruisers, bombed vessels at Cuxhaven.

The first incident of importance in outlying seas was the escape in August of the German battle-cruiser *Goeben* and the light cruiser *Breslau* from the Adriatic to Constantinople,

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which they reached safely at 5 p.m. on August 10th, having been allowed by the Turks to pass up the Dardanelles. Coming from Pola, they coaled at Brindisi on August 1st, passed (northward) through the Straits of Messina on the 3rd, bombarded Bona and Philippeville on the 4th, coaled at Messina on the 5th, left at 5 p.m. on the 6th, passed Cape Malea (Greece) on the 7th, coaled at Denusa Island near Naxos on the 8th and left early on the 10th for the Dardanelles. The British Commander-in-Chief (Sir Berkeley Milne) had at his disposal 3 battle-cruisers (*Inflexible*, *Indefatigable* and *Indomitable*), 4 armoured cruisers, 4 light cruisers, and about 16 destroyers. The principal belligerent sea-forces to be considered in the Mediterranean were 12 French battleships based in Toulon and 6 Austrian battleships in the Adriatic. Italy (neutral) had 3 battleships at Taranto and 4 at Gaeta, near Naples. The British were forbidden by instructions from the Admiralty to violate Italian neutrality. This excluded them from the Straits of Messina, through which the *Goeben* and *Breslau* escaped when they were being shadowed on August 4th by British battle-cruisers. This and other instructions to Sir Berkeley Milne from the Admiralty (especially a direction at 2 p.m. on August 8th to commence hostilities against

Austria, necessitating a redistribution of his forces at a moment when he was following the *Goeben* to the eastward) led to his failure to intercept the German cruisers. A contributory cause was the need to safeguard the movement of the XIXth French Army Corps from Algeria to France and the fact that no plan of combined operations had been drawn up between the French and British naval authorities. Whatever may have been the reasons for the escape of the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, the political results were disastrous. The presence of these vessels in the Bosphorus was the determining factor in causing the Turks to join the Central Powers, thereby playing Germany's game by straining the resources of the British Empire almost to breaking-point before victory could be attained.

Since the days of the Napoleonic wars, when British sea-commanders had to be given a free hand in distant seas to use their own discretion in all situations that arose, the progress of science had placed them in direct touch, by wireless telegraphy and other means of rapid communication, with higher authorities in England. In this example and in the next to be considered, Admiralty intervention had a harmful effect.

The principal outlying force of German cruisers was in the Pacific under the command

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of Vice-Admiral Count Spee. After remaining off various groups of islands where he was not located, Spee succeeded, by October 14th, in assembling 2 armoured cruisers (*Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*) and 3 light cruisers (*Nurnberg*, *Dresden* and *Leipzig*) at Easter Island, which he left on October 18th for the coast of Chile. There he encountered off Coronel on November 4th the old slow British cruisers *Good Hope* and *Monmouth*, the light cruiser *Glasgow* and armed merchant ship *Otranto*, under the command of Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock. The result was a foregone conclusion. Superior speed and long-range gun-power enabled the Germans rapidly to sink the *Good Hope* and *Monmouth*. The *Glasgow*, hit five times without being disabled, succeeded in escaping to the Falkland Islands, joining on the way the old battleship *Canopus* which Cradock had left 300 miles behind on account of her inferior speed. The British Admiral was acting on instructions from the Admiralty "to be prepared to meet the enemy" and to "search."¹

¹ In the opinion of the late Sir Julian Corbett, author of the official history, the expressions used in these orders, if taken together, could only have been interpreted by a British officer in his position as an order to seek out the enemy and to destroy him. *Naval Operations*, Vol. I, p. 344.

He had not received a later telegram explaining that he was not expected to act against Spee without the help of the *Canopus*, but the intentions in that order are obscure. Even with the *Canopus* in company, Cradock's slow force would have been helpless under the long-range gun-fire of the faster *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, which could have steamed round him out of range and unharmed.

On receiving news of the Coronel disaster the Admiralty acted with great energy. By December 7th Vice-Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee, with the battle-cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, the light cruisers *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, *Kent*, *Glasgow* and *Bristol*, and the armed merchant ship *Macedonia*, joined the *Canopus* and *Glasgow* at the Falkland Islands. On December 8th Spee's force, to which the transports *Baden* and *Santa Isabel* had been added, appeared from the southward, and the Battle of the Falkland Islands followed. The Germans, like the British at Coronel, fought to the last and their ships sank with colours flying. In spite of strenuous efforts by the victors to save life, many, including Count Spee, were lost in the icy waters. Of the fighting ships, only the *Dresden* escaped (for the time). The hospital-ship *Seydlitz* fled to the S.S.E.

In considering the use that was made by the

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Admiralty of the vessels that were available for safeguarding sea-communications throughout the world, it is necessary to bear in mind that, in addition to the protection of trade routes and the transport of the British Expeditionary Force and subsequent reinforcements to France, the Navy was faced unexpectedly with the need to provide escorts for bodies of troops leaving India, Australasia, Canada, South Africa and the Mediterranean for various destinations, and for others leaving the United Kingdom for Egypt, India and the German Cameroons. It may be added to the credit of the Admiralty that not a single British Empire soldier lost his life from enemy action at sea during the year 1914.

The outlying German war-vessels, not yet mentioned, that were at large on the outbreak of war included the light cruiser *Karlsruhe* in the Atlantic (lost at sea 300 miles south of Barbados on November 4th through an explosion), and the *Königsberg* in the Indian Ocean, which, after sinking the British light cruiser *Pegasus* at Zanzibar in September, took refuge up the Rufiji River, where she was located on October 30th and dealt with later. The armed German liners which menaced merchant shipping and troop-transports included the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, sunk by cruiser

Highflyer at Rio de Oro in August; the *Cap Trafalgar*, sunk by merchant-cruiser *Carmania* off Trinidad Island in September; and the *Cormoran*, interned at Guam in December. The *Prinz Eitel Friedrich*¹ and *Kronprinz Wilhelm*² were still at large at the end of the year. Of small war-vessels of minor importance in outlying waters, the gunboat *Eber* was interned in Brazil, the *Geier* in November at Honolulu. The surveying vessel *Planet* was sunk by her crew off Yap Island in October, and in the same month the *Komet*, another surveying vessel, was captured off the coast of New Guinea.

There remain the combined operations that were undertaken with the aid of troops to consolidate sea command. These included the capture of Togoland with its wireless station at Kamina on August 26th, the occupation of Apia (Samoa) by New Zealanders on August 30th, and of Rabaul (New Guinea) by Australians on September 12th. Luderitz Bay (German South-West Africa) was occupied by South Africans on September 18th, and Duala (German Cameroons) by a British force on September 27th. An attempt by Indian troops, landed at Tanga in November, to take Dar-es-Salaam

¹ Interned at Newport News, U.S.A., in March 1915.

² Ditto in April 1915.

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in East Africa was repulsed.¹ The Japanese, with British support, captured the important German base at Tsingtao on November 7th.

Such were the principal incidents of the naval situation during the year 1914. The main features were the achievements by the British Navy in ensuring maritime control of the North Sea and Channel, with all the attendant advantages already recorded (including the transfer of the British Expeditionary Force to France) and the security of all the Allied sea-traffic against enemy surface raiders. Minelaying on the High Seas, a new feature of sea warfare introduced by Germany in contravention of Article 3 of the Hague Convention,² was being developed and with it, mine-sweeping, for which at the outbreak of war only 7 torpedo-gunboats and 14 trawlers manned by fishermen were available. The total number of vessels used for the purpose was increased to about 150 by the end of the year. After the loss of the *Audacious* off the north of Ireland on October 27th the Admiralty announced that German mines had been laid in the open sea on the main

¹ Subsequently captured in September 1916, *vide infra*.

² "Where anchored automatic-contact mines are employed, every possible precaution must be taken for the security of peaceful navigation."

trade route from America to Liverpool. On November 2nd the whole North Sea was accordingly proclaimed to be a military area, and arrangements were made to conduct neutral shipping to and from Norway, the Baltic, Denmark, and Holland without risk from the minefields of either belligerent.

After the failure of the plan to overwhelm the French Army on the Marne in September, the Germans realised how much would depend upon allied and neutral merchant ships on the high seas, in their effect both upon the armies and upon the civilian populations. They decided in December to use their submarines ruthlessly against such vessels from the following February.

With the sea-situation in 1914 in our minds, we can pass to the army operations which, as far as the British Empire was concerned, depended almost entirely upon the safety of sea-traffic. All troop-transports required naval escorts. After troops were landed, vessels containing their reinforcements, stores, supplies, and equipment needed safeguarding. Naval co-operation was necessary when landings were in hostile territory. On two occasions in 1914 naval bombardments were undertaken, of which the expediency was doubtful, in that they may have caused additional preparations for defence.

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Dar-es-Salaam in East Africa was bombarded on August 13th. The landing to capture the place in November was unsuccessful. The forts covering the outer channel leading to the Dardanelles were bombarded on November 3rd and parties were landed to damage the guns and mountings.

Military Operations in 1914

While the general control over British military operations was exercised by the authorities mentioned above, the Expeditionary Force under Sir John French in France and Flanders conformed in the main to plans conceived at the French General Headquarters under Joffre. Sir John French was told to "support and co-operate with the French Armies," to exercise the greatest care towards a minimum of losses, and wastage, to understand distinctly that his command was "an entirely independent one," and that he would "in no case come in any sense under the orders of any Allied General."

In that main theatre of war the Germans put in force the "Schlieffen" plan, which had been drawn up in 1905, for violating the neutrality of Belgium in order to obtain sufficient freedom of manœuvre to ensure the envelopment of the northern flank of the French Army. Having dealt as rapidly as possible with France, the intention was to face eastward

and deal with the Russian Army, assuming that its mobilisation and deployment would be a slow process.

As soon as the menace of a Franco-German war was realised, the Belgians distributed their six weak divisions in readiness to resist impartially the violation of Belgian neutrality by French, British, or German troops. It was not until the night of the 3rd/4th of August, when the German menace was obvious, that one division, supported by the defences of Liège, was ready to check a German advance, while four divisions, covered by cavalry, had been directed to assemble on the line of the River Gette. The other division garrisoned the fortress of Namur. These concentrations were completed by August 6th.

In order to avoid any possible accusation of aggression, no French troops had been allowed to be within 6 miles of their frontiers. Under their "Plan 17"¹ it was proposed "whatever the circumstances . . . to advance with all forces united to the attack of the German Armies." In the strategic deployment the French Army on the left did not extend farther to the northward than Mézières, and no steps were taken to construct defences as an aid in

¹ Translated *in extenso* on pages 444-449 of *Military Operations*, Vol. I.

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arresting a German advance round the northern flank. The effectiveness of barbed wire as an obstacle, and improvements in machine-guns and rifles, had added greatly to the value of protective works designed in peace but constructed as a war measure. On the German left, defences of this nature helped materially to stop the first French offensive.¹

The plan previously drawn up by the British and French General Staffs in consultation provided that a British Expeditionary Force of six divisions, a cavalry division, and a cavalry brigade should be mobilised on the same day as the French Army and then proceed to concentration areas between Avesnes and Le Cateau. No definite Cabinet approval had been secured for this plan. In the actual event the British Army was mobilised three days later than the French and only four divisions and a brigade, besides cavalry, were sent, followed by the last two divisions and by others later. In following subsequent developments, due note should be taken of the relative inferiority in numbers of British compared with German machine-guns, and of the value to the French infantry of the celebrated *soixante-quinze* rapid-firing field-gun with its abundant ammunition.

By August 18th the deployment of the German

¹ Hamley, *Operations of War*, 7th Edition, p. 319.

Armies had been completed. Several days' delay had been imposed by the garrisons of the outer forts of Liège before the Belgians fell back towards Antwerp. Then, timed by the readiness of the troops on the right flank, and pivoted on Thionville, the German line of armies began its great left-wheel to outflank and roll up the armies of France under Joffre. By August 21st the French Armies on the right of their line (First and Second) were falling back after having been repulsed with heavy losses from their thrust towards Sarrebourg and Morhange. Farther to the northward the French Third and Fourth Armies had suffered a serious reverse in attempting to advance. The Fifth Army (Lanrezac) on the French left was crowded into a sharp salient between the Sambre and the Meuse, menaced from the north and from the east by the German Second and Third Armies (Bülow and Hausen). Namur was on the point of falling and the Belgian division there was in danger of being cut off. On the outer rim of the great wheel Kluck's (First) German Army was advancing unopposed, and for nearly 30 miles the roads in rear were crowded with his long columns. Should he pass round the flank, inevitable disaster threatened the French Armies and there was rejoicing at German Headquarters.

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Late in the evening of August 22nd Kluck issued ordinary march orders for the next day's advance to give the *coup de grâce* to Lanrezac, sorely pressed by Bülow in his front and Hausen on his right. Early on the 23rd Kluck found Smith-Dorrien's Corps of the little British Army established on the line of the Mons-Condé Canal astride of his roads of advance, with Haig's Corps in echelon on Smith-Dorrien's right, nearly filling the gap between Kluck's and Bülow's Armies. The situation had been saved by Kluck's ignorance of the presence of the British Army (Sir John French) in his front. Marwitz, with a whole corps of German cavalry, was searching for it 40 miles away, at Courtrai. Late on the 21st Kluck had been told from Headquarters that the British had not landed in force, and if the mass of German cavalry had been at his disposal on the morning of the 23rd it is clear that the withdrawal of the British to the southward early on the 24th would have been impossible.¹

The relentless advance of the Germans continued. Many German Reserve Corps had been mobilised and the French had been deceived

¹ To the counter-espionage department in England the credit is due for the ignorance on the part of the Germans, not only of the situation of the British Army, but even of the fact that it had crossed the Channel.

in their calculations of relative strength. The Germans had over 1,400,000 in the field against their million. On the French exposed flank Lanrezac, heavily attacked by Bülow and Hausen from north and east, had already retreated, leaving exposed the right flank of the British. During the inevitable retreat Smith-Dorrien's (2nd) British Corps, which had borne the brunt of the fighting at Mons, again stood at bay at Le Cateau on August 26th, inflicting heavy loss upon the enemy and holding up his advance until the next morning. On the next day Ostend was occupied temporarily by a force of British Marines, which was withdrawn at the end of the month. On August 29th/30th Lanrezac launched the Battle of Guise, causing further delay in the enemy's progress. The result of this action, combined with the rapid retreat of the British, was to leave the French left flank again open to attack. Kluck then changed his direction to the S.S.E., hoping to envelop the French, and in so doing left his own outer flank open to a counter-stroke.

Joffre, when Plan 17 had ended in disaster and the danger on the French left was realised, had moved troops from his right to form a Sixth Army (Maunoury) north of Paris, and another (Ninth) army was organised under Foch to

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stop a gap that existed between the retreating French Armies.

Maunoury, unable to concentrate his army as far to the northward as Joffre had hoped, had moved within the environment of Paris, from whence, as the result of the initiative of Galliéni, commanding the defences of the capital, he threatened Kluck's right flank. Then Joffre, seizing the opportunity, arrested on the line of the River Marne the retreat of the other French Armies, while Kluck, who was compelled to face westward against Maunoury, left a wide gap, held only by Marwitz's tired cavalry, between his own army and Bülow's.

The 9th of September was the critical day. Foch prevented Bülow's and Hausen's troops from pressing farther southward, and the British, who had halted south-east of Paris¹ on the evening of September 5th, crossed the Marne on the 9th, pressing Marwitz before them. Bülow, his right flank turned, was then compelled to fall back. Kluck was ordered to conform to this movement and the retreat in the direction of the River Aisne began. The plan to envelop the French left had failed.

¹ British sea-power enabled Sir John French to change his base from Havre to the River Loire, to receive reinforcements and to have equipment lost in the retreat replaced.

Lack of touch between German General Headquarters and the armies on their right had contributed to the failure. The order to Kluck to retreat was given by a Lieutenant-Colonel (Hentsch), who was visiting the armies and out of touch with Headquarters.

For the Allies to stem the great German advance was one thing; for them to force the invaders to relinquish the French and Belgian territory which had been overrun was another. By September 13th the Germans were established on the line of the River Aisne and by no efforts could they be dislodged. The British front extended from Bourg to the outskirts of Soisson. Two lessons had been learned: the inadequacy of the British Expeditionary Force (now of three corps) to adjust the balance between French and Germans on the Western Front, and the terrible costliness of frontal attacks in the face of modern weapons.

The German left was secured by Swiss territory. Their right flank was still open to a turning movement, and behind it the Belgian Army was holding out within the line of defences covering Antwerp. At the end of September Joffre conceived the following plan for dealing with these conditions: (1) That the Belgian Army should come out of Antwerp, before it was too late, to join the left of the

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Allied Armies; (2) That the British on the Aisne should be relieved by French troops and prolong the left of the French line in accordance with a proposal made by Sir John French, Foch being entrusted with the task of co-ordinating the efforts of the northern group of armies; and (3) That this group should advance to work round the German right, a plan conceived by Foch for a movement eastward from the line Ypres-Nieuport (*Military Operations*, Vol. II, p. 127).

Owing to the intervention of the British Government the Belgian Army remained in Antwerp, where it was reinforced by two untrained and partly equipped Naval Brigades and one of Royal Marines. The place fell on October 9th, the garrison escaping towards the coast with the exception of one Naval Brigade which crossed the Dutch frontier and was there disarmed and interned. Under another provision of the plan made by the British Government when trying to save Antwerp, the British 7th Division and a cavalry brigade, originally intended to strengthen Sir John French's force, were hastily embarked and sent to Zeebrugge, from whence they were compelled by enemy pressure to move towards Ypres. After suffering heavy losses, they succeeded in gaining touch with the 1st British Corps (Haig).

The Naval and Marine Brigades embarked at Ostend for England, and the remnants of the Belgian Army escaped along the coast just in time to hold the line of the Yser with the aid of French Marines.

A continuous defensive line was thus successfully established from Nieuport on the sea-coast southwards. The intended advance was impossible. Joffre's plan for an offensive round the northern flank had been countered by a German plan to use fresh troops that were available in Belgium, and others that were arriving from other parts of their line and from reserve, for a thrust towards Calais and the Channel ports. Foch, whose Headquarters were at Cassel, had had no time to form any properly co-ordinated plans. British and French corps and divisions had been sent up to prolong the line or to fill gaps as they arrived, until, with only a few hours to spare, they touched the right of the Belgians on the Yser. The portion of the Allied line with which we are most intimately concerned was the salient covering Ypres where the "First Battle of Ypres" saw the last of the little British Expeditionary Force that landed in France in August. It opened on October 19th.

After constant pressure by almost overwhelming forces possessing preponderant gun-fire the

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British reserves had been expended and the thin line was on the point of breaking on October 31st when the situation was saved by the recapture of Gheluvelt by a portion of the Worcestershire Regiment. A few reinforcements began to arrive—picked Territorial battalions and drafts of Regulars not up to the standard of the famous “Old Contemptibles” of Mons, Le Cateau, the Marne and the Aisne. The pressure from fresh enemy troops continued to increase until it reached a climax on November 11th, when the Prussian Guard made their great thrust astride of the Menin Road. The British line was held, but at great cost. Between October 14th and the end of November the British casualties in killed, wounded and missing reached a total of 58,000, almost without precedent at the time in British Army annals,¹ but a mere bagatelle in the light of experiences which were to follow. The total British battle casualties in 1914 numbered nearly 90,000. The Germans, thus repulsed, were obliged to assume the defensive in the West and to face eastward to meet the Russian menace.

¹ On November 12th Haig's 1st Division had lost 90 p.c. of its officers, of whom only 68 remained, and nearly 86 p.c. of other ranks, of whom only 2,776 were left.

By invading East Prussia on August 7th and causing the Germans to divert forces from the West to restore the situation, the Russians had helped materially to save their Allies. In the defeat at Tannenberg on August 26th to 31st they suffered severely. The Germans then advanced as far as the Niemen, but on September 28th they were compelled to retreat, followed by the Russians, who defeated them at Augustovo on October 1st to 7th.

Farther to the southward the Austro-Hungarians had invaded Poland from Galicia on August 10th. They had been checked outside Lublin on September 2nd and driven across the River San on September 14th.

In the south-east the Russians had invaded Galicia on August 18th and they had defeated the Austro-Hungarians at Lemberg on September 1st to 3rd and at Grodek on September 6th to 12th. On September 24th they had invested Przemyśl and by September 28th they had taken Krosno and the Dukla Carpathian Pass. A German thrust in the centre to within 7 miles of Warsaw by October 16th only relieved the situation partially, and by October 20th the Russians again took the offensive. On November 11th, the day of the attempt by the Prussian Guards to break through the British at Ypres, they were threatening both Thorn and Cracow.

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It was then impossible for the Germans to ignore the threat in the East.

Before the end of August the Serbians had driven the Austro-Hungarian invaders out of their country on the Southern Front. They checked three subsequent invasions by the close of the year and, in conjunction with the Montenegrins, invaded Bosnia, the Montenegrins during the same period checking an invasion by Albanians from the south.

Such was the general situation when Turkey threw in her lot with the Central Powers and changed completely the strategical problem with which the Allies were confronted. What were the new factors in the problem? For France it remained the same. The soil of France must be freed from the invader. No French territory or vital interests were threatened by the Turks. Russia had frontiers with Turkey and, for security of Russian territory (especially of the valuable oil-fields of Baku), it was reasonable to detach from the Eastern Front in Europe forces of sufficient strength to safeguard Russian interests in the Caucasus, in Asia Minor and in Persia. The British were most closely concerned with the security of Egypt, the Suez Canal traffic, and the oil-fields in South Persia, most helpful to the British Navy. To a Power with so many millions of Mahommedan subjects,

opinion in the Moslem world was also of great moment.¹ To the British Empire, therefore, the problem of helping to protect France and Belgium against the German invading armies had now been widened by developments much further afield.

From the military point of view, the accession of Turkey to the cause of the Central Powers was a triumph of German diplomacy. The result was to reduce the military resources which the Allies could otherwise use against the armies in Europe upon which the expected triumph of Germany depended. On the other hand, it was upon that triumph that Turkish hopes had been built, and if the German Armies could be defeated the support of Turkey was not likely to continue.² For the time being it was clear that the critical situation on the Western Front demanded all the British troops that could be spared. The Turkish menace to British Empire interests was provided against by sending an expeditionary force from India up the Persian Gulf. Landing on November 7th, it took Basra on the 21st and Kurna on December 9th. The safety of the Anglo-Persian oil-fields was thus ensured for the time being. Traffic through

¹ The Sheikh ul Islam declared a Holy War against the Allies on November 11th.

² As was proved in 1918.

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the Suez Canal and British interests in Egypt were to have been safeguarded by Indian troops, but these had been sent hastily to France, their place being taken by Australians and New Zealanders originally destined for the Western Front.

Lord Kitchener had been the only authority amongst British and foreign soldiers and statesmen to grasp the need for supreme national endurance and British sacrifice before victory could be expected in so great a war. In September he had issued an appeal for an addition of 18 new divisions to the Expeditionary Force on the Western Front, while now, "in the British battalions which fought at the Marne and at Ypres there scarcely remained with the colours an average of one officer and thirty men of those who landed in August. The old British Army had gone past recall, leaving but a remnant to carry on the training of the new armies."¹

We have noted in connection with operations to consolidate sea-power that Duala in the German Cameroons was taken by the British in September. This measure was followed by an Anglo-French campaign under the direction of Sir Charles Dobell for the conquest of the country.²

In South Africa the Germans from South-West Africa invaded the territory of the Dominion

¹ *Military Operations*, Vol. II, p. 135.

² Achieved by January 1916.

in August as part of a scheme for raising a rebellion which lasted from September 15th until January 9th, when the last of the rebels had been captured by the forces of the Union Government. General Louis Botha, the Prime Minister, was then able to turn his attention to a counter-stroke to remove the menace from German territory to the interests of the South African Union and of the Empire.

Such, in brief, were the major and minor military operations of the year.

The War in the Air in 1914

At the date of the outbreak of the Great War the art of flying was almost in its infancy. The longest time which an aeroplane had spent in the air was 16 hours. A seaplane had flown for $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The longest distances which had been flown without alighting were 1,050 and 240 miles respectively. An airship had spent 30 hours in the air, and one had covered 960 miles. The record speed of an aeroplane was 112 miles an hour, of a seaplane 78, and of an airship 51. All the above were exceptional.

Heavier-than-air machines found their chief function in the early stages of the war as adjuncts to the older fighting forces, principally in reconnaissance work or as observers with the artillery of armies. The heroism of the pioneers of air

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in service with other arms and in independent missions forms the subject of an epic tale to which full justice cannot be done in so short a summary. Those who wish to trace the progress made in the new art, to which the stress of warfare gave so great an impetus, are recommended to make a special study of the official records contained in *The War in the Air*, of which the first volume was written by Sir Walter Raleigh, the second by H. A. Jones.

The possible effects which the mastery of the problem of human flight might have upon the future had not escaped the attention of the delegates to the international "Peace" Conference held in the year 1907 at The Hague (where most of the time was devoted to the conduct of warfare and more especially to proposals for confining its terrors to the combatants, thus saving the populace from risk or inconvenience). In view of the possible air-menace to them, the words "by any means whatsoever" had been added to the clause forbidding the bombardment of undefended towns, but in course of time this limitation was ineffective, in common with other undertakings and international agreements, to place a limit upon the "violence and cunning"¹ upon which, accord-

¹ *The German War-book*. Translated by J. H. Morgan (Murray).

ing to the Continental doctrines of land warfare, success depended.

Referring to the official summary of air activities during the year 1914, we find that the first recorded hostile act in the air was the passage over Brussels during the night of August 4th/5th of two German airships. On the 9th a British cross-Channel air patrol was instituted for the protection of transports, and an air coast-patrol on the following day. On the 13th and 15th, four squadrons of what was then an Army formation, the Royal Flying Corps, flew across the Channel from Dover. Between the 23rd and 29th two German Zeppelins were shot down by Allied Armies, one in Alsace and one in Poland. Aeroplanes were used for patrol purposes over the British Army in the Mons retreat on the 25th, but fortunately the information thus obtained was not credited by Kluck, whose subsequent change of direction to pass east of Paris was first reported from the air. On August 27th/28th a group of naval aeroplanes and several balloons crossed to Ostend, then occupied by British Marines. On September 22nd (and again on October 8th) aeroplanes of the Royal Naval Air Service bombed Dusseldorf and Cologne, their target being airship sheds. On the same day wireless telegraphy was first used between military aeroplanes and British artillery.

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On November 21st naval machines raided Friedrichshaven. A German airship was first sighted off the east coast of England on December 15th, and German aeroplanes dropped bombs in the sea near Dover on the 21st. On Christmas Eve the first air-bombs dropped from German aeroplanes fell on British soil near Dover. From such small beginnings much was to follow.

Political, Economic and Financial Conditions in 1914

Wars of late years have differed widely in their nature and purpose. Most have been what Clausewitz called "wars with a limited object" in which there was no need to employ the whole of the resources of the nations engaged. British students not acquainted with the original had been misled by an alleged reference by Clausewitz to "limited wars." The particular purpose of the British Government in August 1914 was clearly defined in a communication from Lord Kitchener, as the mouthpiece of the Cabinet, to Sir John French. The object was "to assist the French Government in preventing or repelling the invasion by Germany of French and Belgian territory and eventually to restore the neutrality of Belgium, on behalf of which, as guaranteed by treaty, Belgium has appealed to the French and to ourselves." Such

was the limited object on which the British Government first embarked in the political sphere. Events were to prove that, by limiting the object in war, it is not possible to limit the effort needed for its attainment. Although this was not realised at first in the political field, and the nation was further misled by the use of an expression "Business as usual" by an unwise statesman before the situation developed, the course of events on the Western and Eastern Fronts in Europe and the accession of Turkey to the cause of the Central Powers brought about a rude awakening before the close of the year 1914. The British Empire was clearly involved in what Clausewitz would have called "Absolute War" demanding the expenditure of all the moral and material forces of the major combatants.

While the danger to the Continental Powers lay in invasion by hostile armies, the main menace to the people of the Island Power lay in the interruption of the sea-communications upon which dependence was placed for the food of the populace, for raw material for industries, and even for the needs of agriculture, especially in fertilisers and in winter feed for live-stock. The movement of streams of merchant shipping—the economic life-blood of the United Kingdom—along these lines of communication might

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be threatened by commerce-raiders. Provision had been made against the actual naval risk, but in the circumstances the greater danger was financial. It lay in the possible attitude of the underwriters at Lloyd's, authorities ignorant of the actual situation at sea and likely, as in former wars, to fix the rate of war insurance upon their worst imaginings. For thirty years or more the question of Government intervention in such a crisis had been debated without result, but in this and in other branches of war-preparation we seem to trace the hand of a beneficent Fate. Two months before war broke out unexpectedly preparations had been made for the Admiralty to issue Government policies covering war risks to shipping and to cargoes, basing the rate upon the real dangers likely to be encountered on prescribed routes, and not upon imagination or panic. These policies, issued through Lloyd's, averted the menace. Sea traffic continued.

In the wider financial sphere less foresight had been displayed. The world-wide system of credit was of recent growth. It had never been subjected to the test of a war involving the great financial Powers. No financial authority was able to pronounce an opinion about what would happen if several of these Powers were belligerent, especially England and France, the

principal lenders.¹ In gold reserves the Bank of France held £128,000,000, the Bank of Russia £125,000,000, the Reichsbank of Germany £55,000,000, the Bank of England only £35,000,000—rather a surprising position, since London was the only free gold market. While estimates of daily expenditure to maintain the fighting services in a great war had been left to independent experts,² the general belief was that a strong British fleet was the best protector of London's gold reserves ; that the situation would depend upon the coolness of the British people and upon the views that foreigners took of relative strength at sea as combatants. It was estimated that the most critical period would be the few days or weeks after the declaration of war, or after war became inevitable. On July 31st 1914 the London Stock Exchange was closed. On August 2nd a moratorium was proclaimed which lasted until November 4th, by which date the situation had been stabilised. Defeat at sea would have caused financial collapse.

One of the most important events in the

¹ *Lombard Street and War*. The Round Table, March 1912 (q.v.). The subject is summarised in *Sea, Land and Air Strategy* (Murray), pp. 18-28.

² For Britain, £800,000 per day ; France, £1,800,000 ; Russia, £2,250,000 ; Germany, £2,200,000 ; Austria-Hungary, £1,000,000. (Address to Aldershot Military Society. Edgar Crammond, Jan. 1914.)

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political sphere was the rallying of the nations grouped in the Empire. In the foregoing recital of the operations of the fighting forces certain references have been made to the attitude of the Botha Government of the Union of South Africa in repelling invasion from German territory, and in suppressing a rebellion which that action was intended to stimulate. Also to the occupation by a South African force of the enemy harbour of Luderitzbucht (Luderitz Bay). Those were the contributions that were made by South Africans in the year 1914 to the crusade upon which the Empire had embarked. To subsequent happenings in which South Africans participated in Africa and in Europe we shall turn in due course. We have also taken note of the dispatch of troops from India to various destinations, including the main theatre on the Western Front. From the point of view, apart from these events, of the solidarity of the British Empire, the most important historical incidents were the dispatch, of their own free will, by the self-governing nations in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, of large military contingents to help in developing the little British Expeditionary Force into the great Empire Army which was destined to turn the scale against the Central Powers in the final triumph. The figures for the percentage of the male population of Euro-

pean descent who enlisted for overseas service up to November 1918 run as follows¹: England, 24·02 ; Scotland, 23·71 ; Wales, 21·52 ; Ireland, 6·14. These are based upon an estimate of the male population in July 1914. The figures for the other nations of the Empire are based upon an estimate of their white male populations in July 1911. The percentages are: For New Zealand, 19·35 ; for Canada, 13·48 ; for Australia, 13·43. The percentage for South Africa is given as 11·12, but about 50,000 who took part in the German South-West African campaign have been omitted from that estimate, which should therefore stand at over 18·5 p.c. if service outside their own territory instead of "oversea" service is taken as the standard. The first strong contingents left Canada on October 3rd and Australia and New Zealand on October 17th, security for their sea-transport having been facilitated by the placing of the Australian armoured cruiser *Australia* and other vessels at the disposal of the Admiralty. All these contingents were destined for France, but the hostility of Turkey caused the diversion of the Australians and New Zealanders to Egypt at a time when their services on the Western Front were urgently needed. The first troops from India (taking their place) landed at Mar-

¹ *Statistics of Military Effort* (Official), p. 363.

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seilles on September 26th and reached Flanders on October 19th.

For the rest, there remains the need to take note of the combatant nations in the year 1914, from the date (July 28th) when Austria-Hungary declared war upon Serbia. [Bulgaria (July 29th), Holland (July 30th), and Italy (August 3rd) proclaimed their neutrality.] The British Empire was at war with Germany from midnight, Central European time, on August 4th/5th, with Austria-Hungary from August 12th, and with Turkey from November 5th. France was at war with Germany¹ from August 3rd, with Austria-Hungary from August 12th, and with Turkey from November 5th. Russia was at war with Germany¹ from August 1st, with Austria-Hungary on August 6th, and with Turkey on November 2nd. Belgium was at war with Germany¹ on August 4th and with Austria-Hungary¹ on the 22nd. Montenegro declared war upon Austria-Hungary on August 5th, and a "state of war" with Germany began on the 8th. Serbia declared war on Germany on August 6th, and a "state of war" with Turkey began on November 2nd. Japan declared war on Germany on August 23rd, and a "state of war" with Austria-Hungary began on the 26th, no declaration being made by either Power. Por-

¹ Declared war.

tugal announced on August 23rd an intention to co-operate with Great Britain.

Other diplomatic events of moment included the mobilisation of the Turkish Army on July 31st and the Swiss Army on August 8th. On September 17th the British Naval Mission left Turkey. On the 19th a secret agreement for mutual support was made between Russia and Rumania. On October 7th Japan occupied Yap Island in the Pacific and on December 3rd obtained an agreement that Australia would not occupy any Pacific island north of the Equator, adding a declaration on December 16th that she would not give up the German islands which she had occupied. On December 18th a British Protectorate was proclaimed over Egypt.

On September 5th the British, French, and Russian Governments signed the Pact of London. December 29th was the date of the dispatch of a long memorandum to the United States by the British Government defending the British policy at sea, the germ, in the light of after events, of one of the most important recent developments in world politics.

On December 30th Lord Kitchener received from the Grand Duke Nicolas a suggestion that Great Britain should take military action against the Turks to ease the Russian situation in the Caucasus. The origin of this communication—

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from individual to individual and not from Government to Government—has never been satisfactorily explained. That there was no danger to Russian interests in the Caucasus was proved within a few days, but the incident, as will appear in due course, was used to advocate the Dardanelles adventure which, in its turn, led to a difficult situation in Egypt, to the offensive campaigns against Turkey in Mesopotamia (now Iraq) and in Palestine, to the acceptance by the people of the United Kingdom of the unwelcome responsibility for the settlement and defence of those vast territories, and to heavy burdens being laid upon the British taxpayer. Neither in the political nor in the military sphere did any of these events contribute directly to the original objects, the freedom of France and of Belgian soil from the German invaders, for which the British Government originally entered the war.

Summary, 1914

From the British point of view the outlook at the close of the year 1914 was ominous.

Here, as elsewhere, it is helpful to apply Marshal Foch's favourite question in warfare: "*De quoi s'agit-il?*" What was the definite problem? At sea, it was essential to safeguard the free movement of merchant-ships and troop-transports of all Allied nations. If, as in the

Napoleonic wars, the armies fighting in the cause of Continental "militarism" and the nations behind them could be deprived of the products of sea-traffic, the war would be shortened and an Allied victory would be ensured. The object on land was still to drive the German Armies out of France and Belgium (also, it appeared, out of Russian territory). Until Turkey became hostile, all the resources of the British Empire could be devoted to that object. It was now necessary to devote a proportion of these forces to safeguard British and Allied interests, especially in the Near and Middle East, against Turkish forces used by Germany as cats'-paws to draw her enemies away from herself.

Taking the sea first: The public in the United Kingdom looked upon citizens of the United States as blood-relations, eager to support the obviously righteous cause upon which the British Empire had embarked. Such opinions were based upon misapprehensions. The majority of American citizens were not Anglo-Saxon blood-relations. Many, especially those of German or of Irish origin, were definitely hostile. Some Americans had contemplated with comparative equanimity the flagrant violation of sea-conventions by Germany, while their dissatisfaction at any British reprisal was promptly and forcibly expressed. Anglo-American relations went back

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to 1812, when, as soon as the interests of American citizens were affected by a war in Europe, a President of the United States had said ¹ that "Retaliation, to be just, should fall on the Party setting the guilty example, not on the innocent Party, who was not even charged with acquiescence in it." On that occasion war with Britain was demanded. It was only by Sir Edward Grey's careful handling of the situation that the hostile neutrality—perhaps even the actual belligerency—of the United States was avoided, and that policy meant that a brake had to be applied to the activities of British sea-commanders in their endeavours to exert pressure against the enemy.

On land, the costliness of frontal attacks upon an enemy in positions defended by barbed wire and modern weapons had been abundantly manifested. The right flank of the German Army in the West rested upon the sea, the left upon Swiss territory. The original British Expeditionary Force, whereby it had been hoped to adjust the balance in favour of France and Belgium, had been expended. Its successors, in sore need of better equipment for trench warfare, were grimly holding on, in face of a better provided enemy, to shallow flooded trenches covering the strip of Flanders which had been

¹ President Madison's message to Congress (*British State Papers*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 1318).

saved from the invading hosts. At a meeting at Dunkirk in November, Lord Kitchener had explained the British situation. He then told the French President and Generals Joffre and Foch "very distinctly, that to send untrained men to the fighting line was little short of murder, and that no very important supply of British effectives could be looked for till the late Spring of 1915, but he also said that from then onwards there would be a ceaseless flow of reinforcements, and that, finally, the British Army would touch its high-water mark during the summer of 1917." The French higher authorities accepted, for the time being, Kitchener's estimate of the duration of the war and also the programme which he unfolded to them for the contribution in troops which Britain would make to the Allied cause.¹ A plan for an Allied offensive in Flanders was then drawn up at French General Headquarters.

By the end of the year the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front numbered about 270,000, including over 24,000 Indians. The casualties which had been suffered in killed, died of wounds or disease, wounded, missing and prisoners since the 22nd of August had numbered nearly 98,000, including 6,500 Indians.²

¹ *Military Operations*. France and Belgium. Vol. II, p. 349.

² *Statistics of Military Effort*, p. 253.

CHAPTER III

1915

CONTROL—NAVAL OPERATIONS—MILITARY OPERATIONS—WAR IN THE AIR—POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS—SUMMARY.

Control

GENERAL control over naval and military strategy was still exercised by a small section of the Cabinet called the "War Council" during the early months of 1915. Later in the year it was exercised by the "Dardanelles Committee" similarly composed. The Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, which had been charged with the duty of reporting to the Prime Minister on proposals to use troops away from the Western Front in Europe, unfortunately ceased to be operative. Judging by experience during the first few weeks of the war, its services would have been of value to the Executive charged with the responsibility of forming later decisions.

Naval Operations in 1915

As long as Mr. Churchill remained at the Admiralty, the system of personal control by the First Lord over naval operations remained unaltered. After his resignation, which followed that of Lord Fisher in May, the Sea Lords were left a free hand in purely naval affairs by his successors.

The year began badly with the torpedoing of the battleship *Formidable* in the Channel on New Year's Day, which indicated the need for destroyer escorts to guard capital ships against submarines.

The main incident amongst the surface vessels under Admirals Jellicoe and von Ingenohl in the North Sea was a raid on January 23rd by German battle-cruisers and destroyers under Rear-Admiral Hipper to reconnoitre off the Dogger Bank with the object of destroying any lighter British forces which might be encountered. The British naval intelligence system had been greatly improved, by directional wireless listening stations and by other methods, since the previous raid of December 16th 1914; the British forces in the North Sea, including the Harwich flotilla, were well disposed to cut off the raiders. Touch was obtained by Admiral Beatty with Hipper, who escaped after a stern

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chase with the loss of the armoured cruiser *Blücher* and considerable damage to the armoured cruisers *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger*. Owing to damage done to the *Lion*, Beatty was compelled to shift his flag during the action. Early in February Admiral v. Pohl relieved Admiral v. Ingenohl.

On August 23rd, and again in October, British monitors bombarded German military forces on the coast of Belgium.

In outlying seas the tale of destroying and of neutralising German commerce raiders was completed by the sinking of the cruiser *Dresden*, sole survivor of Spee's squadron, off Juan Fernandez island on March 14th by the *Kent* and *Glasgow*, and by the internment of the armed merchant cruisers *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* (April 8th) and *Kronprinz Wilhelm* (April 26th) at Newport News, U.S.A., by which date over a million soldiers of the British Empire had been transported across the seas without the loss of a single life from enemy action.

We read in the Official British History that : "Never in the long history of our wars had the seas been so quickly and effectively cleared of commerce-destroyers, and in comparison with what had been anticipated, the whole (German) campaign had been singularly ineffective. During the first eight months of the war the loss to British commerce in all seas was estimated

at £6,691,000, and in that period the value of imports and exports to and from the United Kingdom alone amounted to £776,500,000." Allowing for the value of ship-tonnage, this means that only about two-thirds of 1 per cent. of the total vessels and cargoes risked at sea were lost. In the light of what followed it is difficult, when looking back at those early months of the war, to realise the anxiety that was caused by the unlocated surface raiders, or the difficulty experienced in rounding them up.

The principal losses in war-vessels on both sides during the year can here be briefly summarised. In addition to the battleship *Formidable*, the British Navy lost in home waters the minelayer *Princess Irene* by an explosion in harbour on May 27th, the cruisers *Argyll*, wrecked on the east coast of Scotland on October 28th, and *Natal* by internal explosion in harbour at Cromarty on December 30th. In the Mediterranean (Dardanelles) the British lost the *Ocean* and *Irresistible* (March 18th), *Goliath* (May 13th), *Triumph* (May 25th), and *Majestic* (May 27th), all battleships. In the Baltic British submarines torpedoed the German battle-cruiser *Moltke* (August 19th) and cruisers *Prince Adalbert* (October 23rd), *Undine* (November 7th), and *Bremen* (December 17th).

It has been well said that two quite different

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natures of sea-war, above and below the surface, were waged between the combatants in the Great War. In December 1914 the Germans had decided to make ruthless use of their submarines against the merchant ships upon which the Allied Powers depended for keeping their armies in the theatre of war and also for maintaining the economic life of the populace.

The U-Boat warfare can be divided into two phases: the first was put into operation in February 1915, the second later. On February 4th the sea surrounding the United Kingdom was pronounced by the Germans to be a "war area," in which every merchant vessel would be destroyed "without its being always possible to warn the crews or the passengers of the danger impending." Sinkings of neutrals without warning began on March 13th (Swedish vessel) and a climax was reached on May 7th when the great liner *Lusitania* was sunk off the Irish coast with a loss of 1,134 out of 1,906 souls on board.

On March 11th the British Government issued (on the plea of retaliation) an Order in Council and Proclamation relating to the detention of enemy goods, and extending the list of "absolute" contraband. About 700,000 tons gross of the world's shipping were sunk by German submarines by the end of the year.

The following incidents, connected directly or indirectly with the submarine war against merchant shipping, are of some historical interest. On January 30th the British Admiralty issued a warning to fly neutral or no ensigns near the British Isles, and on February 1st closed British harbours to neutral fishing vessels. The *Lusitania* arrived at Liverpool on February 6th flying the United States flag, and on the 7th the Foreign Office issued a memorandum justifying historically the use of a neutral flag by belligerent vessels at sea. On the 11th the U.S. Government sent a formal note deprecating its use. A net-barrage was laid across the North Channel between Scotland and Ireland on February 22nd. On March 4th the first German submarine was caught in an "indicator net." On March 12th the Dutch announced that they would detain any merchant ship visiting a Dutch harbour under the Dutch flag. The first merchant ship (S.S. *Blonde*) was attacked by aircraft on March 15th. The first neutral ship to be sunk after visit and search was the S.S. *Medea* (Dutch) on March 25th. The first passenger ship, S.S. *Falaba* (British), was sunk on March 28th. On April 3rd a barrage of nets was completed across the Straits of Dover. On April 17th a merchant vessel (S.S. *La Rosarina*) beat off a German submarine by her gun-fire, thus

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inaugurating an era in which the Merchant Navy became combatants in their own defence, as in days of old.

The S.S. *Gulflight* was the first U.S. vessel to be sunk without warning (May 1st). On July 18th a German submarine dropped shells at places near Whitehaven in Cumberland. The first authenticated case of the crew of a merchant vessel (S.S. *Ruel*) being ruthlessly fired upon after taking to their boats occurred on August 21st. The unrestricted submarine campaign had not produced the decisive results that had been expected by September 1st, on which day the German Government informed the U.S. Government that the demands made by America for limiting the ruthless procedure were accepted. On November 17th the British hospital ship *Anglia* was sunk, probably by a mine, off Dover. The activities of the mine-sweepers and extension of the Trawler Reserve proceeded continuously, great heroism being shown by the personnel engaged in this hazardous enterprise.

Apart from the Mediterranean—where the Dardanelles campaign needs special treatment as a combined operation—there remain certain areas in which naval events occurred. In the Baltic, Memel was occupied continuously by the Germans from January 14th, with a short interval from March 18th to 21st, when it was retaken

by the Russians. On May 7th the Germans took Libau. There was a Russo-German naval action off Gottland on July 2nd in which the German minelayer *Albatross* was driven on shore. Windau was taken by the Germans on July 18th, but an attempt to capture Riga from August 8th onwards had to be abandoned on the 21st. A German merchant vessel (S.S. *Livonia*) was sunk on October 3rd and light cruiser *Bremen* on December 17th, both by British submarines. The German commerce-raider *Moëwe* escaped into the Atlantic on December 26th.

In the Atlantic the U.S. vessel *William P. Frye* was sunk by the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* on January 28th. A British blockade of the German Cameroons began on April 23rd.

In Eastern waters the Navy co-operated in the defence of the Suez Canal, attacked unsuccessfully by the Turks on February 3rd to 4th. A naval blockade of German East Africa began on March 1st, and on July 11th the German light cruiser *Königsberg* was destroyed up the Rufiji River by British monitors. Naval co-operation in the campaign in Mesopotamia was continuous. Bushire in Persia was occupied on August 8th and Dilbar destroyed between August 12th and 16th. British sea-power was extended over Lake Tanganyika in Africa by the transport overland under difficult conditions of the vessels

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Mimi and *Toutou*, which captured the German gunboat *Kingani*.

The British Navy in 1915 performed, under new and unfamiliar conditions, its historic mission of keeping the seas open to friendly and neutral vessels, while putting such pressure upon the enemy as was possible without incurring the hostility of the United States of America. There were critics who expected that preponderance in capital ships would enable the British Navy rapidly to bring about a decisive victory over the enemy's main fleet, but these were ignorant of the history of sea-warfare in which such battles, commonly believed to be the rule, are in practice very rare exceptions.

Military and Combined Operations in 1915

Mention has been made of the system of control over the general distribution of the sea and land forces under the direction first of the War Council, then of the "Dardanelles Committee" (which became later the "War Committee") of the British Cabinet. Also of the independent line that was taken by the India Office and the Government of India in the initiation and control of operations based upon the Indian Empire. In the year 1915 the main operations against the German Army on the Western Front were designed and con-

trolled by Joffre, assisted by Foch as his deputy, while Sir John French still worked under his original instructions to conform to the wishes of the French Command, with certain limitations already set forth. The British war-aim, to free the soil of France and Belgium from the invader, remained unaltered, and all diversions of force from that area must therefore be considered in their relationship to that main object. The principal diversions were made to the Dardanelles in the Spring, to Mesopotamia and to Macedonia in the Autumn. In order to realise the conditions which governed their initiation and execution, it is necessary to study in detail the best available authority, Sir William Robertson's *Soldiers and Statesmen*, which contains a clear history of these matters based upon official documents of which the most important are reproduced *in extenso*.¹ In so brief a history as this it will not be possible to furnish an adequate description of the state of confusion that was caused by the system of directing British military strategy after the

¹ The accounts in Vol. II, pp. 19–146, explaining the origin of the Mesopotamia and Salonika campaigns, neither of which contributed to the fulfilment of the British war-aim, are of special importance. Vol. I, pp. 150–190, is also of value in the light that it throws upon war organisation.

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abolition of the Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence which advised on such subjects in the early days of the war. It will only be possible to give a brief history of military events in the different theatres, and of the progress made during the year 1915 towards the achievement of the British Empire's definite war-aim.

From a military point of view the year was one of disappointment, largely due to the launching of several simultaneous offensive operations during a critical period when neither trained troops nor munitions of war sufficed to conduct one with any prospect of success. The operations in different theatres had so great an influence upon each other that it will be necessary to depart from the course adopted in the preceding chapter, and to follow, month by month, the principal operations as a whole instead of treating the areas separately.

Several influences at work in the War Council in the early days of January were in conflict with Joffre's view that "the final victory could only be achieved in France" and that "it mattered little what happened in the minor theatres."¹ The definite result was a conclusion at a meeting held on January 9th that "for the present, the main theatre of operations

¹ *Military Operations*, Vol. III, p. 60.

for British forces should be alongside the French Army, and that this should continue as long as France was liable to successful invasion and required armed support." There was, however, a strong current of opinion that was opposed to seeing the New Armies shattered in attempts to break through the German defences in France, which was looked upon as an impossible feat. Proposals were put forward by various authorities for a landing upon the Baltic coast, for an attack upon Turkey, and for withdrawing the bulk of the Expeditionary Force from the "main theatre" and using it *viâ* the Balkans against Austria. No decision was reached during the month of January to initiate military operations away from the main theatre, but on January 13th the Admiralty had been instructed by the War Council to "prepare for a naval expedition in February to bombard and take the Gallipoli Peninsula with Constantinople as its objective."¹ The original impetus which led to that decision was an appeal for help by Russia against Turkey in the Caucasus, but the situation in that area had already been settled by the decisive defeat of the Turks in the Battle of Sarikamish (December 29th 1914 to January 2nd 1915). Other reasons were then put forward in favour of the policy. For some of

¹ *First Report of Dardanelles Commissioners*, p. 21.

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them there was much to be said, but for simultaneous offensives on a large scale with resources inadequate for one there could be no justification.

The effect of the decision was to render far more difficult the attempts to break through the German lines in 1915 while the main German effort was being directed against Russia. With the part that was taken by British Empire troops in making the attempt, while at the same time conducting offensive operations on the Gallipoli Peninsula, in Mesopotamia, and in other parts of the world, we are most directly concerned.

January. In January 1915 the British in Flanders were still occupying the lower ground where they continued to face the terrible experience of holding inadequate and waterlogged trenches in wintry weather, lacking many essentials in equipment for such warfare, against an enemy occupying higher ground and far better provided with his requirements.

On January 28th a naval attempt to force the Dardanelles was sanctioned by the War Council and almost immediately afterwards the advocates of that enterprise inevitably began to press for troops to take part therein. On January 26th the Turks, led by Germans, had begun an advance across the Sinai Peninsula towards the Suez Canal.

February and March. In February the position of stalemate on the Western Front continued, while operations on the Eastern Front included the Battles of Masuria (February 4th to 20th) and of Przasnysz (22nd to 27th), while the Germans prepared for further offensives. The Turkish attack on the Suez Canal materialised, and was repulsed without difficulty on February 3rd and 4th. The independent naval attack on the Dardanelles began on February 19th. Three days earlier (on February 16th) some members of the Cabinet, meeting independently, had decided to send troops to the spot. This decision, which was subsequently confirmed by the War Council, effected a complete change in the military strategy of the war, and led to offensive campaigns on a large scale against the Turks. These were carried on simultaneously with offensives in the main theatre, where Sir John French carried out, between March 10th and 13th, an independent attack on Neuve Chapelle. This, although not achieving any decisive results, was claimed to have improved the morale of his troops after their sore trial in the trench warfare of the winter. Hostilities continued on the Eastern Front in March, resulting on the 22nd in the fall of Przemyśl. By the 18th the purely naval attempt to force a passage through the Dardanelles had definitely

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failed. On March 24th Joffre made an appeal to French for British co-operation in a combined offensive in Flanders.

Of Joffre's general plan to free France and Belgium from the invader, it is written in the British Official History¹ that three lines of advance offered themselves: (1) One from the Artois² Plateau eastwards, (2) An advance from the Champagne country (where a battle had continued from December 20th 1914 to March 17th 1915), and (3) A blow northward from the Verdun-Nancy front, to be delivered as soon as the Germans began to yield as the result of the other advances. "In its essentials this scheme was the basis of all the offensive operations to be carried out by the Franco-British Armies on the Western Front in 1915. It contained, too, the germ of the greater plan that, three years later, was to bring victory."

April to June. The outstanding events of the months of April, May and June were the capture by the British of "Hill 60" on April 17th to 22nd, immediately followed by a German gas attack, contravening all international conventions, which fell upon French Territorial and Colonial troops and upon the Canadian Division

¹ *Military Operations*, Vol. III, p. 689.

² "Artois" included the Departments of the Pas de Calais and of the Somme.

on the extreme left of the British Army, in front of the Ypres Salient. This Second Battle of Ypres lasted from April 22nd to May 25th. The British Second Army suffered nearly 60,000 battle casualties between the 22nd of April and the 31st of May. Foch was unable, after repeated promises, to find troops to retake the ground lost by the French troops, and the British were crowded into a sharp salient (5 miles long and 5 miles in depth) inadequately protected against a heavy and continuous bombardment until they approached the extreme limit of their endurance. Joffre then intervened and the defended line was shortened by a withdrawal from the death-trap.

Foch's object was to avoid using, to retrieve the situation about Ypres, the troops which were intended for the Allied Spring Offensive. This began on May 9th with the British Battle of Aubers Ridge. The Second Battle of Artois lasted from May 9th to June 18th. The British Battle of Festubert from May 15th to 25th. The general result of the Allied Spring Offensive was a failure to achieve the object in view. Lack of ammunition was a potent cause contributing to that failure, and this lack was due partly to the fact that the factories did not fulfil their contracts (out of nearly 1,800,000 rounds of 1st field-gun ammunition promised

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between January and May, less than 800,000 rounds were delivered)¹ and partly to the diversion to offensives in other theatres of much of the ammunition that was actually delivered. On April 25th Sir Ian Hamilton's army effected landings upon the Gallipoli Peninsula, but it failed in its mission of enabling the Navy to force a passage through the Narrows. The requirements for success were secrecy (above all), then rapidity, and then an adequate force in reserve to follow up initial success. Secrecy was not achieved, and apparently not attempted. All hope of rapidity was lost by the failure to pack the holds of the transports with the earlier requirements on the top, and good use was made by Liman von Sanders, the German General in charge of the defence, of the five or six weeks' delay that resulted. No reserves were available to exploit a success. The originators of simultaneous offensives with inadequate resources were thus confronted by the inevitable consequence of their decision. Only the half-hearted and hesitating support of such naval and military authorities as the projectors of the enterprise had consulted had been secured.²

The chief events in other principal theatres

¹ *Soldiers and Statesmen*, Vol. I, p. 61.

² *Dardanelles Commission Report*.

during this same period (April to June 1915) included the launching of the Austro-German offensive on the Eastern Front on May 1st with the Battles of Gorlice-Tarnow (May 1st to 5th), Przemyśl (May 24th to June 11th) and Lemberg (June 17th to 22nd). Italy declared war against Austria-Hungary on May 23rd, and launched an offensive on the Isonzo on June 29th.

At this stage it is necessary to take account of the situation in Mesopotamia from the point where we left it on December 9th, when an expeditionary force from India had established itself at Basra and at Karua, thus securing the safety of the Anglo-Persian oil-fields. Reinforcement of the Turks and the attitude of the Arabs soon necessitated an increase in the number of troops from India, and on April 9th Sir John Nixon took over the command, with instructions from Indian Army Headquarters "to retain complete control of the lower portion of Mesopotamia," including the Basra vilayet, and also, without prejudicing the main operations, to secure the safety of the oil-fields. The nature of these "main" operations was clearly indicated by instructions to submit plans for a subsequent advance on Baghdad. Amara was taken on June 3rd and an advance up the Euphrates began on June

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26th. In the documents bearing upon this advance there is no trace of any consideration of the operation in its bearing upon the British war-aim (to clear French and Belgian soil from the invader). The ultimate result was to cause the diversion of troops and munitions when they were sorely needed for that purpose. The Mesopotamia Commissioners reported, after disaster had resulted, that General Nixon's instructions "revolutionised the whole foundation and organisation of an expedition initiated and founded for much smaller and more limited objects."

July to September. A Third Army was added to the British Expeditionary Force under Sir John French on July 11th. Until nearly the end of September the situation was fairly quiescent in the main theatre, the time being spent in recuperation, in accumulation of ammunition (of which the shortage had been one of the main factors in stopping the Spring Offensive) and in reorganisation. Late in September the Allies again assumed the offensive in accordance with plans drawn up by Joffre and Foch who had at first been told by Sir John French that, with the small forces and war material at his disposal, he could give them little more than artillery support. Haig, commanding the First Army, had expressed still more definitely

his objections to an infantry attack in the circumstances. These opinions were overridden by Lord Kitchener, who gave a direct order "to do the utmost to help France in her offensive, even though by so doing we may suffer heavy losses."

Lord Kitchener had been influenced in his decision by political reasons and by what the British Official History calls "the full results of distracted strategy and disconnected campaigns."¹ The British Commander-in-Chief, we are told, was therefore compelled to undertake operations for which he was not ready, over ground that was most unfavourable, against the better judgment of himself and of General Haig. (See also under "Political and Economic" events in 1915.)

Late in September the Allied Autumn Offensive opened with the Battles of Loos (September 25th to October 8th), the Third Battle of Artois (September 25th to October 18th) and the Second Battle of Champagne (September 25th to November 6th). The failure to bring up available reserves at the critical moment was a contributory factor in the failure to achieve decisive results in the British Battle of Loos, in which, and in its sequel up to October 16th, the British Expeditionary Force suffered over

¹ *Military Operations*, Vol. IV, p. 129.

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50,000 casualties. (The total battle casualties suffered by Sir John French's army on the Western Front during the year 1915 exceeded 285,000.)

Turning now to events in other theatres of war during this same period, we find in the Gallipoli theatre a landing of fresh troops at Suvla Bay and the Battles of Suvla Bay (August 6th to 21st), of Sari Bair (August 6th to 10th) and Scimitar Hill (August 21st). All failed, with heavy loss, to achieve their purpose.

On the Eastern Front, against Russia, another great Austro-German Offensive was launched on July 1st, resulting in a constant series of successes and in numerous battles, leading to the capture of Warsaw (August 5th to 7th) and further battles of which the chief were the Battle of Tarnopol (September 7th to 16th) and of Dvinsk, which was still proceeding at the end of September.

On the Italian front the First Battle of the Isonzo concluded on July 7th. That and the Second Battle (July 18th to August 10th) resulted in failure to force a way through the Austrian defences.

In far-away Mesopotamia General Nixon's force continued to move up the Euphrates on its ill-defined mission, taking Nasiriya on July 25th, and there followed an appeal for the

withdrawal of the Corps of Indian troops from the main theatre in Flanders. (This Corps ceased to exist on December 8th and the last transport left Marseilles on December 26th. They had suffered since October 1914 about 34,000 battle casualties, of which nearly 13,000 were in British units.)

October to December. On the Western Front the Battle of Loos was carried on until October 8th, the Third Battle of Artois until the 15th, and the Second Battle of Champagne until November 6th. On the Eastern Front the Central Powers brought their successful offensive against Russia to a conclusion on November 5th. On the Italian Front a Third Battle of the Isonzo lasted from October 18th to November 3rd, and a Fourth Battle in the same area from November 10th to December 10th. In Mesopotamia Kut was taken on September 28th and an advance on Baghdad began on November 11th, resulting in the Battle of Ctesiphon (November 22nd to 24th), followed by a retreat to Kut, where General Townshend's force was invested on December 5th. While the preceding operations had been largely due to initiative taken in India, the disastrous advance on Baghdad had been encouraged by the British Cabinet as a set-off to the failure in Gallipoli. A cable emanating from the India Office had

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been sent to the Viceroy stating that "The Cabinet are so impressed with the great political and military advantages of the occupation of Baghdad that every effort will be made by us to supply the force that is necessary."¹

After a "Black August" in the world theatre of war and the unsuccessful offensives launched on the Western Front on September 25th, it became evident that Serbia was faced with a serious crisis owing to an impending attack by Austro-German forces from the north, and to the attitude of the Bulgarian Army, which was mobilised on the same date. Greece, although promised the support of the Allies, failed to fulfil her treaty obligations to Serbia. On October 5th a French Division and a British Division arrived at Salonika from the Gallipoli force. The French moved inland, too late to aid the Serbians. On the same day the British agreed for political reasons (see below), against their proclaimed policy and the advice of the General Staff, to withdraw four divisions from the Western Front and to send them to Salonika. France sent two divisions and two cavalry divisions. On October 23rd the Bulgarians took Uskub, cutting off the Serbian line of retreat to Salonika. On November 30th the Serbian Army was compelled to retire through the

¹ *Soldiers and Statesmen*, Vol. II, p. 42.

mountains of Albania to Durazzo, whence the remnants embarked for Corfu. The Allied measures to succour Serbia were too late, and by December 15th the Anglo-French force had been withdrawn to Greek territory, covering Salonika.

In the Gallipoli operation Sir Ian Hamilton was relieved by Sir Charles Monro on October 20th. By direction of the Cabinet (December 7th) a withdrawal from the Anzac and Suvla area was completed by December 20th. Seven days later the Cabinet agreed to the evacuation of the Helles area, which was accomplished on January 8th 1916.

On December 17th Sir John French, at the suggestion of the Prime Minister (conveyed verbally by Lord Esher), resigned his command and was succeeded by Sir Douglas Haig. The Loos offensive had collapsed. The French had failed to make progress either in Artois or in Champagne. There was great dissatisfaction in England at the results of the Neuve Chapelle, Second Ypres, Aubers Ridge, Festubert and Loos battles, which had involved terrible losses without breaking the enemy's line, though "the difficulties of the task, the lack of adequate means, and the even greater failures and greater losses of our Allies were an explanation that might well be urged."¹

¹ *Military Operations*, Vol. IV, p. 408.

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At the close of the year the strength of the British Empire Army on the Western Front stood approximately at 993,000, including about 51,000 Canadians. The total in January 1915 had stood at about 333,000, and there had been over 285,000 battle casualties in this main theatre during the year. The troops diverted to the Mediterranean and Egypt numbered about 341,000. The battle casualties sustained in the Gallipoli campaign had nearly reached 113,000, and the wastage from sickness and other causes had been so heavy that the total employed (nearly 470,000) in that campaign had amounted to about four times the maximum strength on the peninsula at any one time.

Such, with the peril to General Townshend's small force, surrounded at Kut, were the main results of the military and combined operations in the principal theatres of war during the year 1915.

Elsewhere we must take account, in the South African area, of General Botha's successful campaign in German South-West Africa which capitulated on July 9th, and of the progress of Sir Charles Dobell's Allied force in West Africa, where, after the capture of Garua on June 10th, the conquest of the country was gradually being completed (the last German troops fled into Spanish territory on February

17th 1916). In Western Egypt the Senussi opened hostilities in the Sollum area and operations against them began on November 23rd. In East Africa affairs were quiescent. In Arabia Idrisi Arabs occupied the Farasan Islands in the Red Sea on January 31st. They concluded a treaty with the British Government on April 28th. The Turks attacked Perim (June 14th to 15th) unsuccessfully and there was some trouble in the Aden hinterland (June 20th). In Asia (excluding Turkish territory) there were some minor troubles on the North-West Frontier of India between March and September. A Russian force destined for West Persia landed at Enzeli in the Caspian on May 21st, and occupied Kasvin on November 2nd, Hamadan on December 14th and Kangavar on Christmas Day. The British Residency at Bushire in Persia was attacked by tribesmen on July 12th, and the place was occupied by a British force on August 8th. Birjanel in East Persia was also occupied on October 7th.

All these operations and incidents, though not in any way contributing to the achievement of the British war-aim—clearing France and Belgium of German troops—illustrate the widespread British responsibilities, involving the use of military force, which had inevitably to be taken into account.

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The War in the Air in 1915

The Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service continued during the year 1915 to operate as branches of the Army and Navy respectively, sharing in their work as in 1914. Early in October, at a critical period in the Autumn offensive in Flanders, the Germans established a definite superiority in the air by the use of their new "Fokker" machines and an invention whereby a stream of machine-gun bullets could be projected through revolving propellers. The Allied troops suffered accordingly.

The first German airship raid, on the east coast of England, occurred on January 10th. On the 24th the German airship P.L.19 was brought down by rifle-fire on the Baltic coast near Libau. German airships L.3 and L.4 were lost and destroyed on February 17th off Fäno and near Blaavands (Denmark). The first German airship raid on Paris occurred on March 21st, and on the London area on May 31st. On June 7th the German airship L.Z.37 was destroyed near Ghent by Lieutenant Warneford in an aeroplane, the first incident of the kind on record. L.12 was damaged by British aircraft near Ostend on August 10th, and on November 5th L.Z.39 was destroyed near Grodno in Poland.

The most severe airship raid on England in the whole war was carried out on October 13th, when bombs were dropped on London and places on the east coast. The casualties numbered about 200, mostly civilians.

Although there is no doubt that the air-raids in England caused some slowing down of the output of munitions in certain factories, the general effect of the slaughter of civilians was to cause exasperation and to strengthen the national determination to bring the war to a successful conclusion. [This sentiment was further accentuated by the use of liquid fire by the Germans against the French in the Argonne (February 20th) and of poison gas in the Second Battle of Ypres in April; and also by the trial and execution of Nurse Edith Cavell in Brussels on October 12th.]

*Political, Economic and Financial Conditions
in 1915*

Events on sea and land and in the air in 1915 still further accentuated the serious nature of the task upon which the British Empire had embarked in August 1914. Military preparations had been inadequate. That land armaments should keep pace with foreign policy is a principle easy to state but very difficult to apply, and the answer from the political side

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was that the responsible military authorities the newly-created General Staff, had themselves been unaware of the extent of military effort that would be needed to adjust the balance between the French and the German Armies employed on the Western Front in Europe. As Sir William Robertson, himself a Director in the General Staff at the War Office in 1914, has since pointed out, "the truth probably is that the vision of the General Staff did not extend much, if at all, beyond that of the Government, and at any rate the view they put forward was that the addition of the Expeditionary Force to the French Armies would give just that numerical superiority over the armies of Germany required to turn the scale against her."¹ This statement is supported by the evidence of the late Lord Haldane, Secretary of State for War at the time.² While on the one hand it might be advanced that the originators of the French "Plan 17," so costly in casualties, were responsible for the increased demand for British military assistance, there was, on the French side, a view that expelling the invader from French soil was as much a British as it was a French interest. Comparatively little public account was taken in

¹ *Soldiers and Statesmen*, Vol. I, p. 40.

² *Before the War*, p. 160.

France of the British contribution at sea, or of her financial and economic assistance. The need for military effort to safeguard Britain's world-wide interests when Turkey joined the Central Powers was not realised.

A National Register of citizens was taken in Britain on August 15th, and on September 30th Lord Derby assumed control of recruiting. Men of military age were divided into classes and a pledge was given to call up the single before the married. Requisitioning ships for carrying food was established on November 10th. All these measures showed a growing realisation of the need for extreme effort. A Ministry of Munitions had been formed under Mr. Lloyd George on July 2nd.

The British "War Council" of the Cabinet met for the last time on May 14th. On the 15th the First Sea Lord (Lord Fisher) resigned, and on May 25th a new (Coalition) Ministry was formed by Mr. Asquith to allay public discontent with the conduct of the war, and more especially with the Gallipoli venture. On the 27th the First Lord (Mr. Churchill) resigned. On June 5th British and French Ministers conferred (for the first time) at Calais to co-ordinate war policy and strategy. The political effect of the Dardanelles venture was indicated by change of name of the "War Council" to

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the "Dardanelles Committee." That, in its turn, became on November 3rd the "War Committee," which decided upon withdrawal from that theatre of war.

Public opinion and indignation at military failures combined with heavy losses led to a more serious political crisis in France. This caused the retirement of M. Viviani, the Prime Minister, and Millerand, the Minister for War, on October 29th, their places being taken by M. Briand and General Gallieni respectively on the following day. To subservience by the British Government to the French political authorities may be attributed the formation of the Allied Army at Salonika. Without that concession the Entente itself would have been imperilled.

Relations with the United States were equally delicate, especially as they were influenced by the British measures, taken on the plea of reprisals, to deal with the German unrestricted use of submarines. One example of Allied diplomacy can be quoted in that connection. The German S.S. *Dacia*, interned in the United States, was sold to an American citizen called Breitung on January 6th. On February 11th she left for a German port (Bremen) with a cargo of cotton, as a test case, with the expectation that she would be seized by a British

man-of-war. On February 27th she was intercepted and seized by *French* war-vessels,¹ and on March 22nd the French Prize Court declared the seizure valid. On March 18th the British Government came to an agreement with American cotton interests that cotton should be contraband, and on March 29th with the American rubber interests that rubber should not be exported except to Britain.

In the financial and economic sphere the London Stock Exchange reopened on January 3rd. The British, French and Russian Governments agreed to pool their financial resources on February 5th, and on June 3rd the first meeting was held in Paris of an Allied Conference on Economic War. Rumania negotiated a loan in Great Britain for £5,000,000 on January 11th, Bulgaria a loan of £3,000,000 with Germany on February 3rd, and another of 400 million francs with Austro-German banks on August 6th. On January 26th the Entente Governments agreed to hold the "Pact of London,"² applicable to the war with Turkey,

¹ With a touch of humour, it had been hoped to find a French vessel called *Lafayette* to effect the capture!

² This was a Pact, signed by the British, French and Russian Governments on September 5th, 1914, not to conclude a separate Peace. Italy agreed on April 26th 1915, Japan on October 19th 1915.

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and on November 30th Britain, France, Russia, Japan and Italy formally signed the Pact. On March 11th the British Government issued a Proclamation extending the list of absolute contraband articles.

The Dominion policy of military contribution to British Empire war effort was exemplified by the first Canadian Division which left England for the main theatre on the Western Front on February 9th. Orders for the Australian and New Zealand troops in Egypt to be employed at the Dardanelles were issued on February 20th. On March 14th Mr. Harcourt, Secretary for the Colonies, stated that the Dominions would be consulted on the Peace terms. On July 14th the British Cabinet was attended for the first time by a Dominion Premier (Sir Robert Borden).

Passing to diplomatic agreements, the Italian and Rumanian Governments on January 15th announced a secret arrangement for mutual support. Great Britain and France signed on March 1st a declaration to prevent trade by or with Germany in reply to a demand from Russia (March 1st). The British Government on March 12th and the French on April 12th told the Russian Government that they accepted Russia's claims to Constantinople. (This was made public by the Russian Premier on December

Britain) was prevented by the demand for reinforcements for the force sent to Salonika at the instance of France, where the political situation gave cause for disquietude.

Though accepted by the French at the end of 1914, the British policy of delaying offensive operations until the newly-raised British Army was properly trained and equipped, had been abandoned in response to French demands. The strength of the main British Army in Flanders at the end of the year has been mentioned under "military and combined operations." The grand total of British expeditionary forces in all theatres of war numbered between 1,300,000 and 1,400,000.

Some further reference is needed here to the views of those who sought easier methods of achieving the British war-aim of driving the German Armies out of France and Belgium, than the simple but difficult course of defeating the invaders in the field. It was believed that, if Germany's Allies could be crushed, a ring could then be formed round Germany herself, and that space could be obtained to use the Allied Armies which, until the Russian collapse, were greatly superior. It is impossible to follow the arguments for and against the encircling policy, remaining on the defensive in France and Flanders, or to estimate the strength of

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the minimum force which would have sufficed to avert decisive defeat in that theatre of war (which would have rendered nugatory successes gained elsewhere), as it is not possible to state the course which the enemy would have pursued. It will be wiser, therefore, to confine our attention to the actual plans and to their execution, rather than to consider alternatives coming within the realm of conjecture.

CHAPTER IV

1916

CONTROL—NAVAL OPERATIONS—MILITARY OPERATIONS—WAR IN THE AIR—POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS—SUMMARY.

Control

CONTROL over war operations in 1916 continued to be exercised by a "War Committee," which was responsible to the large Cabinet for the conduct of sea and land strategy until public opinion, fostered in the Press, brought about a change in December. At that time the smaller "War Cabinet" was established and was destined, as the "Imperial War Cabinet" of the whole British Empire, to be entrusted with responsibility until the conclusion of the war and the establishment of peace conditions. These matters will be dealt with in further detail under the heading of political events. In sea strategy, after the experience gained in overriding the opinion of the Sea Lords in 1915, the Admiralty was left unfettered by higher authority in mat-

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ters affecting its own province. In devising land operations the leading part in the main theatre of war on the Western Front was taken by Joffre, assisted by Foch, while Sir Douglas Haig, the new commander of the British Expeditionary Force, conformed to their plans which were upset by the return of German troops from the Eastern Front and their concentration in a heavy attack against the French at Verdun, beginning in February.

On January 27th 1916 Sir William Robertson, the new chief of the Imperial General Staff, was made "responsible for issuing the orders of the Government in regard to military operations"; but at the same time "the old custom which permitted the India Office, Colonial Office, and Foreign Office respectively to wage little wars on their own account in India, the Colonies, and the Protectorate . . . was allowed to survive."¹ The strategic control over operations in Mesopotamia was, however, transferred from Indian authorities to the War Office on February 3rd, and transfer of administrative control followed in July 1916. On June 5th Lord Kitchener was drowned in H.M.S. *Hampshire*, off the Orkneys, when on his way to Russia, and Mr. Lloyd George became Secretary of State for War.

¹ *Soldiers and Statesmen*, Vol. I, p. 171.

Naval Operations in 1916

The principal features of the naval operations of 1916 were the revival on the German side of submarine warfare activities in March, and the Battle of Jutland on May 31st to June 1st.

In January 1916 Admiral Scheer took over the command of the German High Seas Fleet on the death of Admiral Pohl, and on March 14th Admiral v. Capelle replaced Admiral Tirpitz as Minister of Marine.

The year began badly with the sinking of the battleship *King Edward VII* by a mine off the north of Scotland on January 6th. On the 16th the German raider *Moëwe*, which had escaped to sea in December, began her captures of merchant shipping. She took one prize (S.S. *Appam*) to Norfolk, U.S.A., on February 1st and returned to Germany on March 4th. A shipping control committee was formed by the British Government on January 27th and on the same day German troops on the Belgian coast were bombarded from the sea. On February 10th German light forces raided British mine-sweepers off the Dogger Bank, and on the 11th H.M.S. *Arethusa* was sunk by a mine in the North Sea. A "Ministry of Blockade" was established in London on the 23rd. The German Government on February 10th had told

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the United States Government that all defensively armed merchant ships would be treated as belligerents from March 1st, and on February 21st that such vessels would be treated as cruisers. On the 23rd the Portuguese seized German merchant ships that were sheltering in the Tagus. On the 29th the British blockade of the Cameroons was raised, General Dobell's campaign having been brought to a successful conclusion on the 18th. An action was fought on February 29th in the North Sea between the German raider *Greif* and the British auxiliary cruiser *Alcantara*. Both vessels were sunk, the *Greif* by the *Alcantara*, the latter by a German destroyer.

On March 1st a new extended German submarine campaign was launched against merchant shipping, and the passenger steamer *Sussex* was torpedoed on the 24th. On April 20th the *Aud*, a disguised German transport, was caught, and sunk by her crew, when trying to land arms on the Irish coast. (A rebellion in Ireland broke out on April 24th.) Lowestoft and Yarmouth were raided on April 25th by German battle-cruisers, which escaped. This raid gave the first indication of renewed activity of the High Seas Fleet under its new commander, who, as is now known, had planned a further raid upon Sunderland, supported by the whole High

Seas Fleet, for May 18th. This plan was abandoned, the weather being unfavourable for the Zeppelin airships upon which Scheer proposed to rely for information to enable him to escape from Jellicoe's superior forces. He had no intention of fighting a fleet action. German submarines were then distributed to watch all the Scottish harbours containing portions of Jellicoe's force, and Scheer decided to embark upon "a campaign against cruisers and merchantmen outside and in the Skagerrak." Preceded at 2 a.m. by Hipper's battle-cruisers, Scheer's High Seas Fleet left the Jäde roadstead half an hour later on May 31st and steamed northward. The Battle of Jutland resulted.

In accordance with an order from the Admiralty at 5.40 p.m. on May 30th to "concentrate to the eastward of Long Forties ready for eventualities," Sir John Jellicoe's Grand Fleet from Scapa in the Orkneys and from Cromarty, and Sir David Beatty's force from Rosyth, had put to sea between 9 and 10 p.m. At 2.30 p.m. on the 31st Beatty's light cruiser screen gained touch with Hipper's cruisers steering northwards and Beatty steered to cut Hipper off from his base. In the running fight to the southward which resulted the British battle-cruisers *Indefatigable* and *Queen Mary* were lost through magazine explosions.

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Beatty's force included 4 fast battleships (Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas), 6 battle-cruisers, 15 light cruisers and 31 destroyers. Hipper had 5 battle-cruisers, 5 light cruisers and 33 destroyers.

At 4.40 p.m. Scheer's High Seas Fleet, which had been following Hipper at an interval of about 50 miles, came upon the scene. Beatty then turned to the northward, as did Hipper, followed by Scheer. Superior speed enabled Beatty to increase the range during the northward movement to rejoin Jellicoe, and the action died down.

Passing now to the Grand Fleet, which with auxiliary formations covered nearly 400 square miles of sea (the greatest armada in the history of the world), we find that Jellicoe, as soon as he knew of the forces with which Beatty was engaged, increased his speed to the utmost limit, at the same time ordering Rear-Admiral Hood, whose battle-cruisers formed an advanced force, to proceed to the aid of Beatty. Owing to differences in dead-reckoning between Jellicoe's and Beatty's forces and to other causes, Hood found himself far to the eastward of Beatty's course and he was steering north-west to find Beatty when, at 5.50 p.m., he was discovered by one of Hipper's scouting groups and mistaken for a portion of the Grand Fleet.

The impression conveyed upon Hipper's mind, and subsequently upon Scheer's, was that British battleships were approaching the scene of action from the south-east, and in this belief Hipper altered course to the eastward to pass astern of them, and the High Seas Fleet conformed.

At 6 p.m. Beatty gained actual touch with the starboard or westerly wing division of the Grand Fleet, which had not yet deployed, and it was not until 6.14 p.m. that Jellicoe was supplied with sufficient information about the actual position and course of the High Seas Fleet to enable him to make his plan. Within two minutes the Grand Fleet had received orders to deploy on the left or port division in a direction calculated to bring Jellicoe's whole fleet in line of battle ahead of the High Seas Fleet and across its line of direction. Beatty, as soon as he realised the situation, altered course to the east and south-east, steering diagonally across Jellicoe's front to get ahead of the leading battleships, and Jellicoe reduced the speed of the fleet to enable him to do so. Evan-Thomas, too late to follow, took station by a skilful manœuvre astern of the line. At about 6.30 p.m. Hood, still in action with Hipper's force, joined Beatty, and four minutes later his flagship, the *Invincible*, blew up, her

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magazine exploding. Hipper's battle-cruisers had by this time come within range of some of Jellicoe's battleships. His flagship, the *Lutzow*, was burning fiercely. He left her and tried to board the *Seydlitz*, but she also was on fire, and he ultimately went to the *Derfflinger*.

The main features of the action between Jellicoe's and Scheer's armadas, fought at long range under conditions of bad visibility owing to fog and battle-smoke, were two attempts by Scheer to move to the eastward, met on both occasions by the Grand Fleet in line of battle across his course, and Scheer's final escape at 7.17 p.m. to the westward, covering his retreat by a dense smoke-screen emitted from cruisers and destroyers and by torpedo attacks. At about 8.30 p.m. Beatty's battle-cruisers, steering south-west at high speed, gained touch again for a few minutes, but Scheer was last seen escaping to the westward in the failing light. At 9 p.m. both Jellicoe and Beatty were between Scheer and his base and all looked well for a decisive British victory on another "glorious First of June."

Jellicoe, after sending the *Abdiel* to lay mines off Horn Reef, ran to the southward until 2.45 a.m., when he turned north, hoping to renew the action. Scheer, without Jellicoe's knowledge, had altered course for Horn Reef

directly after dark and his south-easterly course had taken him across the track of the Grand Fleet. He slipped between Jellicoe and the land, losing an old battleship (*Pommern*) on the *Abdiel's* mines, leaving Jellicoe in command of the North Sea outside the minefields protecting the approaches to the German bases.

In addition to the loss of 3 battle-cruisers of Beatty's and Hood's commands, the British losses included 3 armoured cruisers (*Defence*, *Warrior* and *Black Prince*) and 8 destroyers. The Germans lost 1 battleship (*Pommern*), 4 light cruisers (*Wiesbaden*, *Elbing*, *Rostock*, *Frauenlob*), and 5 destroyers. The *Seydlitz* (battle-cruiser) just succeeded in reaching harbour and would have been lost if the battle had been fought farther from the German bases. All the British capital ships except the battleships *Marlborough* (torpedoed) and *Warspite* (damaged by gun-fire) were ready for sea within 24 hours of reaching their bases. Six German battleships had to enter dry-dock for repairs, and Scheer was unable to report his fleet ready for sea again until the middle of August.

Skilful propaganda, based upon relative losses, enabled the Germans to claim a victory for the first few weeks, but after making short sorties in August, October and November, taking precautions by air observation to avoid meeting

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the Grand Fleet again, Scheer made no further bid for the control of the North Sea. In course of time Admiral Tirpitz wrote that, as a result of Jutland, "the countries that were still neutral had lost their belief in our (German) ultimate victory," and the British official historian writes: "Nothing in the two years had done more to change the position in England's favour than the Battle of Jutland; for a superiority which had before been only demonstrable was then actually demonstrated."¹

The strength of Jellicoe's Grand Fleet (apart from Beatty's force, above mentioned) was 24 battleships, Hood's 3 battle-cruisers, 8 armoured cruisers, 12 light cruisers and 46 destroyers. Scheer, besides Hipper's force, had 22 battleships (6 of old design), 6 light cruisers and 45 destroyers.

Other naval occurrences in the main theatre in 1916 included the loss on June 5th of the cruiser *Hampshire*, carrying Lord Kitchener, by striking a mine laid on May 29th by a German submarine west of the Orkneys; a declaration by the British Government on July 7th by Order in Council that the Declaration of London of 1909 must definitely be rescinded; the shelling of Seaham (Durham) by a German submarine on July 11th; the shooting (July

¹ Sir H. Newbolt, *Naval Operations*, Vol. IV, p. 233.

27th) of Captain Fryatt of the Merchant Service by order of a German Court-Martial for taking steps to save his vessel from U-Boat attacks (this, like the shooting of Nurse Cavell, increased the determination of the British Nation to fight on for decisive victory); the sinking of the British cruisers *Falmouth* and *Nottingham* by a submarine in the North Sea on August 19th; a German destroyer raid in the Dover Straits on October 26th/27th; the loss of the British hospital-ship *Galeka* on October 28th by striking a mine off Havre; the escape of another German commerce-raider, the *Seeadler*, to sea on November 22nd, followed by the *Moëwe* again on the 26th and by the *Wolff* on December 1st. On November 26th the Germans again raided Lowestoft with light forces.

In the Atlantic the German commercial submarine *Deutschland* succeeded in reaching Norfolk, U.S.A., on July 10th, returning to Germany on August 23rd. An armed German submarine, "U.53," captured and sank five merchant ships off Rhode Island, U.S.A., the most westerly operation of that nature and one of doubtful expediency in view of its effect upon American sentiment. The French battleship *Suffren* was sunk on November 26th by a submarine in the Bay of Biscay. Funchal (Madeira) was bombarded by a German submarine on December 3rd.

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British and Allied vessels lost in other parts of the world included the French cruiser *Amiral Charner*, sunk by a submarine off the Syrian coast; the Russian hospital-ship *Portugal*, sunk by a submarine in the Black Sea on March 30th; the British battleship *Russell*, which struck a mine near Malta on April 27th; the British river vessel *Julnar*, lost in an attempt to relieve Kut in Mesopotamia on April 24th; the Italian battleship *Leonardo da Vinci*, sunk at Taranto by internal explosion on August 2nd; the Russian battleship *Imperatritza Mariya* at Sevastopol from the same cause on October 20th; and the Russian hospital-ship *Vpered*, sunk by a submarine in the Black Sea on July 10th. The British hospital-ship *Britannic* was sunk by a mine in the Ægean on November 21st, and the hospital-ship *Braemar Castle*, probably from the same cause, on the 23rd. On December 11th the Italian battleship *Regina Margherita* was sunk in an Italian minefield, and on December 27th the French battleship *Gaulois* by a submarine in the Mediterranean.

There were many losses by mines, and due note will doubtless be taken of the German policy of using submarines as minelayers as an effective method of developing from 1914 onwards the system, in contravention of international covenants, of sowing mines broadcast

in the highways of sea-traffic. An average of 180 mines were swept up per month by British mine-sweepers in 1916.

Other events affecting the British Navy in 1916 included operations in Mesopotamia, beginning on January 4th, to attempt the relief of Kut; an appeal on February 8th by the British Government to Japan for naval assistance in the Western Hemisphere; the sinking on February 9th of the German gunboat *Hedwig von Wissman* on Lake Tanganyika by the British vessels *Mimi* and *Fifi*; blockades of the Hedjaz coast from May 15th, a "pacific blockade" of Greece from June 6th to 22nd, and a regular blockade from December 8th after the Greeks had fired upon Allied troops which landed at the Piræus on November 30th and withdrew, with loss, on the following day. The island of Chios in the Ægean was occupied on February 17th, and certain places in German East Africa later in the year—Tanga on July 7th, Dar-es-Salaam on September 4th, Kilwa on the 7th, and Lindi on the 16th.

While experience had shown that employment of the German High Seas Fleet in the North Sea involved too great risk for further sallies to be attempted, that fleet was still a potential danger. At the same time the experience of Trafalgar was repeated. In spite of a successful

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fleet-action, a strong British Navy was needed to maintain sea-power.¹

On December 3rd Admiral Jellicoe was transferred to the Admiralty as First Sea Lord to deal with the major menace that had arisen from the activity of German submarines, the command of the Grand Fleet being taken over by Admiral Beatty. On the 12th Sir Edward Carson relieved Mr. Balfour as First Lord.

Military and Combined Operations in 1916

While the plans for military operations in the main theatre of war on the Western Front in Europe were made by the French military authorities, and conformed to by Sir Douglas Haig, responsibility for the distribution of British Empire troops and for the proportion allotted to each theatre rested with the "War Committee," nominally subject to the approval of the whole Cabinet. An inter-Allied conference, presided over by Joffre, had been held early in December 1915 at Chantilly to decide upon the plans for 1916. A resolution was then passed unanimously that a decision could only be obtained in the principal theatres, defined as those in which the greatest portion of the

¹ In 1805, Trafalgar year, there were 698 British war-vessels in commission, including 124 of the line. The figures for 1809 were 807 and 158 respectively.

enemy's troops was to be found (*front russe, front franco-anglais, italien*). On December 28th the War Committee approved a submission by the General Staff that, from the point of view of the British Empire, France and Flanders were to be considered the main theatre of operations, and that British efforts there were to be directed to undertaking offensive operations in close co-operation with the French and Belgians and in the greatest possible strength.¹

Egypt was to be allowed a defence force. Policy in Mesopotamia, when Kut had been relieved, was to be defensive. In German East Africa von Lettow-Vorbeck had organised native levies and raided Uganda. To meet this menace arrangements had been made to relieve the situation by sending an expeditionary force, in which troops from the Union of South Africa predominated, under the command of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien. These arrangements were to stand. The situation at Salonika continued to cause some anxiety and to lead to a further diversion of force from the Western Front.

As matters turned out in the main theatre, plans made by Joffre and Allied military authorities for a strong offensive on the Somme involving a large number of French divisions, as soon as the new British Armies were ready,

¹ *Soldiers and Statesmen*, Vol. I, p. 254.

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timed so as to be co-ordinated with Russian and Italian offensives, was forestalled by the Germans, who launched heavy attacks against the French about Verdun on February 21st. Against these attacks the French were obliged to remain on the defensive in that area until the end of August, and to leave it to the British to take the leading part in the Somme offensive.

Owing to the attacks conducted in 1915 the Allied troops on the Western Front had done little to improve their defensive positions. The necessary labour for the purpose could not be found excepting at the expense either of the armies in the field or of munition workers. The Germans, on the other hand, had used forced labour from the occupied portions of Belgian and French territory and prisoners of war taken on the Russian front to construct dug-outs, protected positions and obstacles, all on a formidable scale.

Pressure upon the French in the Verdun sector became so serious that the offensive of the British Army on the Somme to relieve the situation could not be postponed until a later date than July 1st. It lasted until November 18th, one of the results being to absorb so many German troops that the French were able to conduct successful offensives, first under Pétain and subsequently under Nivelle, in the

Verdun area from October 24th to December 18th.

Experiences in 1915 had shown that attacks, even if they broke through the enemy's prepared lines of defence, did not lead to decisive results because they were ultimately repulsed by the enemy's reserves, so in the Allied plans for 1916 it was hoped to exhaust these reserves while still keeping fresh troops in hand for a final attack, leading to a definite break-through to reach the communications in rear and to enforce an extensive retirement.

The Battle of the Somme opened on July 1st with a main attack by the new British Fourth Army between the River Ancre and Maricourt, in touch with the French Sixth Army (Fayolle) on the right, directed by Foch. Away to the northward the French Army had been relieved to suit Joffre's plans, so the British held the line continuously as far as the Ypres Canal. After the first onslaught Haig divided his attacking front by forming a Fifth Army on the left of the Fourth. The battle was fought in three stages, the second beginning on July 23rd and the third on September 15th, when the first tanks, a British invention, were employed. At the close of the second phase on the Somme at the end of August (two months) 36 German divisions had been engaged on the

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British front and 28 on the French front, compared with 43 in six months at Verdun, so their defensive battle on the Somme exhausted their reserves more rapidly than their offensive battle at Verdun.

The failure of Falkenhayn's plan of attack was indicated at the end of August by his supersession. Hindenburg, who had earned a name for his successes against the Russians on the Eastern Front, took his place, with Ludendorff as Chief of Staff (Chief Quarter-master-General). Verdun was safe and the situation had completely changed since the month of June, when the days were being counted for its fall. Hopes ran high. British successes had been gained at a terrible cost, largely due to the inexperience of the new national army, thrown into the battle of necessity—to relieve the situation at Verdun—before being properly trained and seasoned; but the third period opened well with the British in possession of the high ground overlooking the valley of the Upper Ancre. Their attack, directed north-east towards the communications of the enemy holding a salient, penetrated the German third line of defence; but although 127 German divisions had been engaged, the enemy still fought hard, drawing troops from all parts of the line to avert disaster. Too

many weeks had passed for the final attack to succeed. Days became shorter and the weather worse and worse until, on November 17th, the attacks were finally abandoned.

At the time, the results were not seen on the Somme but at Verdun, where Nivelle's fine attacks of October 24th, November 5th and December 15th, against his weakened opponent, making skilled use of his mass of experienced artillery, were brilliant successes. Thousands of prisoners were taken, and guns by the hundred. On December 12th, before Nivelle's final success, the Central Powers led by Germany had proclaimed, through the medium of American Ambassadors in their capitals, their readiness to negotiate for peace, and to this result the new voluntarily enlisted British Army which had endured so great a sacrifice on the Somme had contributed in no mean measure. Though not appreciated at the time at its true value, this sacrifice was one of the main factors that sapped the enemy's strength and led to the ultimate collapse of 1918.

We can now turn to military operations in other main theatres which marked the progress that was made in 1916 towards the final victory on land. These we can study chronologically, including the Italian, Balkan, Eastern Front and Turkish theatres of war.

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January. The month of January was marked by certain activities in the Balkans, in Persia and in Mesopotamia. During an armistice between Austria-Hungary and Montenegro, lasting from the 12th to the 20th, Austrian troops occupied Cettinje, the capital, on the 13th. The remnants of the Serbian Army embarked at Durazzo and were landed at Corfu. The Serbian Government, on the 15th, sought security on the soil of Italy at Brindisi. The Austrians occupied Antivari, Scutari and other places. In West Persia the Turks occupied Kirmanshah. In Asia Minor the Russians moved on Erzerum between the 20th and the 25th. A first attempt by the British and Indian relieving force to save the garrison of Kut in Mesopotamia failed on January 21st.

February. On the 15th, about a week before the German offensive against Verdun, the Fifth Battle of the Isonzo opened on the Italian front. It lasted until March 17th without decisive result. In the Balkan theatre Montenegrins landed at Corfu on the 16th. On the 27th the Austrians occupied Durazzo, too late to reach the Serbian rearguards. In Asia Minor the Russians took Erzerum on the 16th, and in West Persia they recaptured Kirmanshah from the Turks on the 26th. The conduct of the war in Mesopotamia was

altered on February 16th by the transfer of responsibility for control over the operations to the War Office at a time when the relief of Kut was becoming urgent but largely dependent upon the improvement of communications behind the relieving force. This, being an administrative matter, still remained under the Government of India.

March to June. On the Italian front the Austrians launched in the Trentino on May 14th an offensive which, had it been successful, would seriously have threatened the communications of the Italian Army fighting on the Isonzo. The offensive came to an end on June 3rd and was followed by local counter-attacks from June 4th to 16th, and then the Italians launched an offensive which lasted from June 17th to July 7th and secured the situation. On the Balkan front, Serbian Army Headquarters were established at Salonika on April 15th. On the Eastern Front there was considerable activity, the main incident being the Battle of Lake Naroch (April 17th to 30th), resulting in favour of the Russians. The main event on this front during the same period was the appointment of General Brusilov to command on the southern portion of the front on April 4th. On June 4th he launched his great and successful offensive which, with the failure of

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the Germans at Verdun and their losses and expenditure of reserves on the Somme, was a contributory cause of their peace-move in December. The Battle of the Strypa (June 11th to 30th) was the principal action on the Eastern Front during this period.

In areas affecting the war with Turkey the incidents most disastrous to British prestige in the East were two attempts, both repulsed, to relieve Townshend's force at Kut in Mesopotamia on March 8th and April 1st, and the capitulation of the unfortunate garrison on April 29th. Bitlis in Armenia was taken by the Russians on March 2nd, and on the 4th a landing was effected at Atna for an advance on Trebizond which was attacked and captured between April 6th and 18th. Karind in Western Persia was taken by a Russian force on March 12th and Qasr-i-Shirin on May 7th, Khanaqin (north-east of Baghdad) on May 15th, Rowanduz in Northern Mesopotamia on the same day. On the 18th a Russian detachment from West Persia was in touch with the British on the Tigris. On June 5th the Turks took the offensive in West Persia and the Russians fell back, losing Qasr-i-Shirin on June 28th and Kirman-shah at the end of the month. In Arabia the projected Arab revolt in the Hedjaz materialised on June 5th. Medina was attacked by Arabs

on the next day, and on the 10th the Turkish garrison of Mecca surrendered to the Sherif.

July to December. During the last six months of 1916 (the period of the Battles of the Somme and of Verdun) activities on the Italian front included further attempts by the Italians to advance on the Isonzo in the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth battles in that area on August 6th to 17th, September 14th to 18th, October 9th to 12th, and October 31st to November 4th.

On the Salonika front the reconstituted Serbian Army came into the front line on July 25th, and on the 30th Russian troops landed at Salonika. General Sarrail, who had been in command of the Allied troops since early in January, took the offensive in the Battle of Doiran, followed by a Bulgarian counter-offensive, the operations lasting from August 2nd to 21st. On September 18th a whole Greek Army Corps at Kavala surrendered to the Germans and was interned in Germany. As a result of the Battle of Cerna and Monastir (October 5th to December 11th), Monastir was captured on November 19th and remained in the hands of the Allied Forces.

We left the situation on the Eastern Front in Europe immediately after the opening of the "Brusilov" offensive and the Battle of the Strypa. The Battle of Baranovichi on this

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front was launched on July 1st, the same day as the Battle of the Somme, and lasted until the 9th. It was followed by another Battle of Baranovichi (July 10th to August 9th), the Battle of Kowel (July 28th to August 17th) and other actions.

On August 16th the Russians announced officially that, in their offensive between June and that date, their captures had included nearly 359,000 prisoners, 405 guns, 1,326 machine-guns and much additional war material. Since subsequent events were to prove that, with this magnificent offensive, the ill-equipped Russian Armies had nearly shot their last bolt and were destined soon to dissolve (as the result of a revolution long overdue, rather than of the military situation), it will be well here to recall the great services already performed by the Russian Army to the Allied cause. During that same month of August 1916 the French were still on the defensive at Verdun. The British, having repulsed fierce counter-attacks by the Germans to regain the plateau bordering the Somme, were slowly and at great cost fighting their way forward until, on September 9th, they had taken Ginchy and could look down the slopes to the Tortille with possession of nearly the whole plateau. Russia's loyal contribution to the failure of Germany to

achieve her purpose in the West from the days of the Battle of the Marne in September 1914 and throughout the year 1915 was still fresh in the minds of her Allies.

Largely as the result of Russian successes, but at an inopportune moment, Rumania declared war on Austria-Hungary on August 27th, invaded Transylvania on the 28th, and took Brasov on the 29th, Sibiu on September 1st. On the 8th Orsova in Hungary was captured, but the Rumanian successes were short-lived. Turkey entered the lists against Rumania on August 30th and Bulgaria on September 1st. An offensive in the Dobrudja by the Bulgarians gave them Silistra on September 10th. Sibiu in Transylvania was retaken by Austro-Hungarians on September 29th, and on October 7th to 9th the Battle of Brasov gave that place to an Austro-German force. Constanza in the Dobrudja was taken by the Bulgarians on October 25th. Further disaster to the Rumanians followed, and on November 23rd Mackensen's German troops crossed the Danube at Islaz and Simnitza. After the Battle of the Arges in Rumanian territory (December 1st to 5th) Bucharest capitulated to the Germans on December 6th. The Battle of Rimnicul-Sarat in Rumania began on December 21st, and an Austro-German offensive on the Trotus

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front began on December 26th and was still proceeding in the New Year.

On July 19th the Turks, incited by the Germans, renewed their activities, abandoned in February 1915, against the Suez Canal. They advanced from Oghratina, and were met on August 4th/5th in the Battle of Rumani. From August 6th to 12th they were retreating, fighting rear-guard actions against their pursuers. In a counter-offensive the British advanced into the Sinai Desert on November 15th and by December 21st were in possession of El Arish.

In Armenia Erzinjan was taken by the Russians on July 25th, Mush and Bitlis by the Turks on August 15th, but only held by them until recaptured on the 24th by the Russians. Russia's farthest west in Armenia was to Mamakhatun, taken on July 12th from the Turks. In Western Persia the Turks reoccupied Hamadan on August 10th.

In Mesopotamia operations were begun by the Anglo-Indian forces on December 13th for the recapture of Kut from the Turks.

Passing now to happenings in Africa during the year 1916: in West Africa hostilities in the Cameroons were brought to a close by the surrender of Mora on February 18th and the surrender of the German colony to Sir Charles Dobell.

In East Africa General Smuts, Minister of Defence in South Africa, assumed command of the expeditionary force (see 1915) owing to the illness of General Smith-Dorrien. An offensive towards Kilimanjaro began on March 5th. Taveta was taken on March 10th, New Moshi on March 13th, Kondoa Irangi on April 19th, New Langenberg on May 27th. A British force, under General Northey, advanced from Northern Rhodesia on May 25th. On June 8th Bismarckburg was taken. The Portuguese took Kionga on April 11th. A German attack on Kondoa Irangi was successfully repulsed on June 9th to 10th. Handeni was taken on June 19th, Tanga on the coast on July 7th, Mwanza on the 14th, Kilmatide on the 31st. On August 5th an advance began through the Nguru Hills. On August 11th Mpwapwa was taken, on the 15th Bagamoyo, on the 22nd Kilosa, on the 26th Morogoro, on the 29th Iranga. Dar-es-Salaam, the main port, surrendered on September 4th. Kisuki was taken on September 7th, Lindi on the 16th, and on the 19th a Belgian force occupied Tabora with its powerful wireless telegraphy station.

In Western Egypt and in the Sudan hostilities between the Sudan Government and the Sultan of Darfur began on March 1st and lasted until the end of the year, the main

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incidents being an advance from Nahud into Darfur on March 10th, the occupation of El Fasher on May 23rd and an affair at Gubla on November 6th.

On the western frontier of Egypt, threatened by the Senussi, Sollum on the coast was re-occupied by a British force on March 14th.

Even at the risk of monotony, it has been necessary to provide this comprehensive summary in order to bring into prominence the widespread military responsibilities which rapid expansion of territory in the 'eighties and 'nineties of the nineteenth century threw upon the British Empire. Egypt, secured by the British Navy against coastal invasion, had to be protected against land invasion by a formidable army in the east, against Senussi raids in the west; and the Sudan against Darfur in the south. In East Africa it was deemed necessary to undertake widespread operations involving the use of considerable force, to safeguard various regions under the British flag against forces of armed natives under German command. So also in West, in Central, and in South Africa.

After contemplating these matters, adding to them the more serious military effort involved by a prospective advance in Mesopotamia to restore prestige lost by failure in the Dardanelles,

and considering the diversion of force for political reasons to Salonika, it is perhaps not surprising that difficulties were experienced in concentration of purpose upon the proclaimed war-aim of Great Britain—the freedom of French, Belgian, Russian and Serbian soil from the invaders. To that had been added in 1916 the need to perform, sooner or later, the same service for Rumania.

Concentration of purpose requires concentration of thought upon the essentials of a problem, disregard of non-essentials, reversion to the phrase constantly on the lips of Marshal Foch, “*De quoi s’agit-il ?*” and to Napoleon’s “There are many good generals in Europe, but they think of too many things at a time” (to Austrian generals at Leoben). Up to December 1916 the authority charged with considering the main problem, how to drive the German Armies out of France and Belgium, was Joffre, advised by Foch, with the co-operation of Haig commanding the new British Armies which were expected to reach their maximum strength in 1917 and thenceforward to decline. Late in 1916 these authorities in combination drew up a plan for exploiting, early in February, the advantages so hardly earned on the Somme, where the weather in November had prevented a further advance on the eve of what appeared

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to be decisive success. On December 12th Joffre was deprived of his command, being succeeded by Nivelle, the hero of the day after his offensive at Verdun. With the change of commanders came a change of plans which comes within the sphere of military operations in 1917.

Turning now from policy to statistics, we find that the strength of the British Empire Expeditionary Force in the main theatre in France and Flanders at the end of 1916 was approximately 1,592,000, including about 125,000 Australian and New Zealand troops, 105,000 Canadians, and 5,500 South Africans whose numbers during the year had reached nearly 6,800 but had been reduced by hard fighting, especially in their heroic action at Delville Wood in the Somme Battle.

In other theatres, the figure for the "Mediterranean and Egypt" area (excluding Salonika) was about 164,000; for Salonika, 187,000; for British East Africa and Uganda, 55,000; for Mesopotamia, 150,000, including about 85,000 Indians. The approximate total in all these theatres amounted to 2,151,000. The battle casualties on the Western Front in the year 1916 numbered over 643,000, including more than 29,000 officers. In view of this holocaust of sacrifice without, as some began to believe, any corresponding military advantage, it is not

surprising that there should be a party amongst the leaders in the country who were dubious about supporting the views of the General Staff that the war could only be won on the Western Front, whatever expenditure of life might be involved by that policy. Mr. Lloyd George, who became Prime Minister in December, had favoured some alternative, involving less sacrifice, from the outset.

The War in the Air in 1916

It has been written of the Battle of the Somme in 1916 that "next to the astonishing valour of our astonishing infantry must rank the achievements of our airmen." Not only were the opposing airmen driven almost entirely from the battlefields and German depots, railways and reserves bombed, but machine-gun fire was poured into the ranks of the German infantry in the front of the battle. Ascendancy in the air, lost before the Battle of Loos in 1915, was regained in April 1916. An Air Board was formed in England in May, and on November 25th the German Air Force became a separate branch of the German Army.

The activities of German airships were marked by the last German airship raid on Paris on January 29th; the most westerly raid on England (east coast and Midlands), on the 31st,

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causing 183 casualties, nearly all civilians ; and the foundering of the German airship L.19 in the North Sea on February 2nd. On the 16th the War Office took over from the Admiralty the anti-aircraft defence of London and the provinces. On the 16th L.Z.77 was brought down by French gun-fire at Revigny ; on the 28th the nucleus of a British air squadron was formed to bomb German industrial centres. On March 31st 112 casualties, mostly military, were caused by a German air-raid on the east coast, and L.15 was brought down by gun-fire in the Thames estuary. On May 3rd L.20 was wrecked at Stavanger, Norway, returning from a raid in Scotland, and on the 4th L.7 was destroyed off the Slesvig coast. On September 2nd 14 airships, the largest number to attack simultaneously, raided London. S.L.11 was destroyed at Cuffley from an aeroplane. Another raid on the east coast and London by airships took place on the 23rd, causing 170 casualties, mostly civilians, L.32 being destroyed by an aeroplane at Billericay and L.33 by gun-fire in Essex. On October 1st L.31 was destroyed from an aeroplane at Potter's Bar, and on November 27th the last airship raid of the year on the east coast of England caused the loss of L.21 and L.34 from aeroplanes off Hartlepool and Yarmouth on the night of

November 27th. The principal distant aeroplane bombing raid of the year was carried out by the French on September 24th against Krupp's works at Essen.

In more remote areas Constantinople and Adrianople were bombed by British naval aeroplanes on April 14th, and on May 5th the German airship L.Z.85 was brought down at Salonika by British gun-fire.

259 civilians (including 92 women and 53 children) were killed and 508 injured by airship raids on the United Kingdom in 1916. 33 soldiers and sailors were killed and 83 injured. The numbers of civilians killed by aeroplane raids was 13 and of injured 42, compared with 5 soldiers and sailors killed and 19 injured.

Political, Economic and Financial Conditions

In the political, financial and economic spheres, the year 1916 was one of extreme crisis, involving an urgent need both for guidance and for strong government. The question of finance was the least critical. In November 1914 a war loan had produced £331,000,000. In 1915 £600,000,000 had been raised through Bank and Post Office, and enough had been raised by taxation to balance a Budget needed to meet war-costs amounting approximately to £3,500,000 a day. The cost steadily rose, reaching £5,000,000

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a day early in 1916, and a vote of credit for £450,000,000 was passed at a single sitting of the House of Commons without critical discussion. The agreement between France, Russia and Great Britain in 1915, previously mentioned, to pool their resources laid upon Britain the heaviest financial burden and national economy in place of "business as usual" had become the call, which was further enforced by the activities of German submarines against merchant shipping.

The nation as a whole began also to feel the strain on man-power for the fighting services and for the munition factories behind them, and whilst, on the one hand, the slaughter of women and children by Zeppelins and the shooting of Nurse Cavell increased the national determination to endure sacrifice until the war was won, the lure of high wages to be earned by munition workers influenced the individual in his choice between such work and the service of sacrifice. Nearly 3,000,000 men for the army had been raised by voluntary service, but this process fell unevenly upon the manhood of the country. The situation now demanded that strength and justice should be substituted for opportunism and makeshifts in national leadership. The first Military Service Act, a tentative measure that was passed on January 24th, came into force on February 10th. Between

April 24th and May 1st there was open rebellion in Ireland and the situation in that country created a demand for troops that were urgently needed elsewhere. On May 25th a second and stronger Military Service Act (never applied to Ireland), which had been passed by the House of Commons on May 16th, came into force in the United Kingdom and was received with acclamation by the large patriotic majority of the people.¹ On December 19th the British Government decided to institute national service on a more comprehensive basis.

The "War Committee" of the Cabinet met for the last time on December 1st. On December 4th Mr. Asquith resigned the Premiership of the Coalition Government and on the 7th he was succeeded by Mr. Lloyd George, who, two days later, formed the small "War Cabinet" of members freed from departmental responsibility and directly responsible to the country for the conduct of the war. Mr. Balfour became Foreign Secretary in place of Lord Grey of Fallodon, who resigned; Lord Derby took the place of Mr. Lloyd George at the War Office; and Sir Edward Carson Mr. Balfour's place at the Admiralty. A Ministry of Labour was formed on December 11th, thus inaugurating a policy of providing a wealth of minor ministries

⁵ New Zealand followed suit on June 10th.

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to deal with certain questions of policy with which the Cabinet had hitherto been hampered. A Food Controller was appointed on December 16th.

On February 16th the Entente Powers bound themselves by a Declaration to secure the independence of Belgium, and indemnification. This was followed on March 28th by a Declaration of unity in military, diplomatic and economic affairs between Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Portugal, and Russia. On March 26th the Belgian guarantee was extended to the Congo territory.

Outstanding events in foreign affairs in 1916 included, on January 26th and July 28th, protests by the United States against a "Black List" policy, recently adopted by Great Britain (December 23rd 1915) to endeavour to increase the pressure upon the enemy of the sea-power of the Allies. On April 18th a protest was issued by the United States, in connexion with the *Sussex* case (March 24th), against German submarine policy in general, and on May 26th a further protesting note was sent to the British Government about search of mails. On July 7th, as already mentioned, the British and French rescinded their adherence to the Declaration of London. On December 18th President Wilson, who had been re-elected on November

7th, issued a circular note to the belligerents suggesting negotiations for peace. This appeal enlisted little sympathy amongst the Entente Allies but gained the support of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey (December 26th) and of Bulgaria (December 30th), no statement of war-aims being forthcoming from those Powers.

Germany on March 9th and Austria-Hungary on March 15th declared war on Portugal, and on August 8th Portugal decided upon military action in Europe. Somewhat prematurely, in view of the military situation, the Allied Powers began in the Spring to divide amongst themselves territory not yet captured from Turkey under what was known as the "Sykes-Picot" agreement. France and Russia did so on April 26th, Britain joined with France on May 9th, and informed Russia on the 23rd, after having come to an agreement on the 16th with France about Anglo-French claims in Turkish territory. Britain and Russia came to an agreement on the subject on September 1st.

Italy declared war against Germany on August 18th.

In the Balkan States a Provisional Government for Albania (Essad Pasha), which had been set up at Durazzo in October 1914, moved to Naples on February 28th and to Salonika on September 20th. Rumania on January 20th

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negotiated with Russia about military assistance and finally concluded, on August 17th, an agreement and military convention with the Entente Powers. On the 27th she declared war against Austria-Hungary. Germany declared war against Rumania on August 18th, Turkey on August 30th, and Bulgaria on September 1st. On September 29th M. Venizelos formed a Provisional Greek Government in Crete in opposition to the Athens Cabinet, which resigned on October 3rd. Venizelos went to Salonika on October 9th, and on November 23rd his Government declared war against Germany and Bulgaria. Friction and naval and military incidents between the Entente and the Athens Government have already been described in connexion with the naval and military operations. On December 19th Britain recognised the Venizelos Government. This settled the trouble with Greece for the time being, but the co-operation of Greek troops with the Allies did not contribute to the ultimate victory. It came too late to be of much service.

In the economic and in the financial spheres Allied and Anglo-French conferences were held in Paris on June 14th and November 19th, in London on July 14th and 15th, and at Calais on August 24th.

At the close of the year the solidarity of the

Entente Alliance was proved during an Anglo-French Conference, held in London, to discuss the German and President Wilson's "Peace Notes."

Summary, 1916

At sea, in the month of March, reversion to ruthlessness in German submarine policy began to cause some further understanding amongst the people of the United States of the true nature of the European conflict. The Jutland victory followed at the end of May. On land the year was noted for the failure of the German attack upon the French at Verdun, for the British costly successes upon the Somme, for the "Brusilov offensive" on the Russian front, for the French counter-offensive at Verdun (all destined to ensure the ultimate victory of the Allies), and for the German success against Rumania, which served, for the time being, to encourage the hope of the German people to secure, without further sacrifice, a favourable peace with the occupied portions of France and nearly the whole of Belgium as assets for bargaining. Britain had only the successes of Smuts in East Africa to set against the disaster to British arms at Kut in Mesopotamia.

In the military sphere the year 1915 had been one of disappointments. 1916 marked a

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period of holding on, at whatever cost, for ultimate victory. The grand total of British expeditionary forces in all theatres had gone up to 2,151,000 by the end of the year, and the numbers were still rising. During the last quarter (October 8th to December 9th) the daily average expenditure of Great Britain on war effort in sea, land and air forces, munitions and shipping rose to over £5,700,000. It was hoped, under a Franco-British agreement of December 30th, to ease the situation in military man-power by using Chinese labour in France.

The establishment by Mr. Lloyd George of a small War Cabinet in London on December 9th was followed on December 12th by a re-organisation in Paris of M. Briand's Government ; and the formation in France of a similar War Cabinet of five members advised by Joffre, now a Marshal of France, provided a more vigorous conduct of the war. Both Prime Ministers were seeking a more rapid decision of the issue than that offered by the plan drawn up by Joffre, Foch, and Haig for an early advance in February to enforce the lesson of the Somme. The change of plan and postponement of the offensive were destined to contribute in 1917 to military disasters which, added to the losses of Allied merchant ships, were nearly fatal to the Entente.

CHAPTER V

1917

CONTROL—NAVAL OPERATIONS—MILITARY OPERATIONS—WAR IN THE AIR—POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS—SUMMARY.

Control

THE main features affecting the control of the operations of the fighting forces in the year 1917 were the success of the War Cabinet system, as affecting the British Empire forces, and the urgent need that was disclosed for unity with Allies about direction over military plans and their execution. On account of the divergence between the political war-aims of the belligerents, it was necessary that greater unity in political control should first be devised to approve plans of campaign, but little was done in that direction until the revolution in Russia, which led to an abandonment of all obligations to her Allies and set free German troops for an attack in October upon the Italian Army. The Italian

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disaster of Caporetto which followed this attack led to an inter-Allied Conference at Rapallo on November 7th. At that conference a proposal was initiated to establish a "Supreme War Council" of statesmen of the Allied countries in order to ensure political unity, the military representatives at the outset being Generals Sir Henry Wilson (Great Britain), Foch (France), Cadorna (Italy), and Bliss (U.S.A.). The Supreme War Council was placed upon a permanent footing on December 1st, holding its meetings at Versailles. Co-ordination by council was the best expedient that could be devised at the time, but when rapidity of decision, and of action following decision, was enforced upon the Allies in the following year by an attack upon the British far graver than that experienced by the Italians at Caporetto, the utility of the Versailles Supreme War Council for the purpose was destined to fall gradually into abeyance. Its services in co-ordination of effort, not only of the Entente Alliance but also of the United States of America "associated" with that alliance, proved to be invaluable at a critical period in the winter of 1917-1918.

Naval Operations in 1917

Sir Edward Carson, who had become First Lord of the Admiralty in December 1916,

resigned that office on July 19th 1917. Sir Eric Geddes became First Lord on September 6th 1917. Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, appointed in December 1916, resigned the office of First Sea Lord on December 26th 1917 and was succeeded by Sir Rosslyn Wemyss. The year was marked by the gravest crisis in the annals of British sea-power, caused by the unrestricted use of German submarines and mines, an increase in their numbers, and the difficulty that was experienced in coping with these novel forms of sea-warfare at a time when heavy additional burdens had been thrown upon the British Navy for maintaining the sea-communications of armies engaged in extensive military operations in so many different parts of the world.

“Who,” writes Lord Jellicoe,¹ “would have ever had the temerity to predict that the Navy, confronted by the second greatest Naval Power in the world, would be called upon to maintain free communications across the Channel for many months until the months became years in face of the naval forces of the enemy established on the Belgian coast, passing millions of men across in safety as well as vast quantities of stores and munitions? Who would have prophesied that the Navy would have to safeguard the passage of hundreds of thousands of troops

¹ *The Crisis of the Naval War*, p. xi.

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from the Dominions to Europe, as well as the movement of tens of thousands of labourers from China and elsewhere? Or who would have been believed had he stated that the Navy would be required to keep open the sea-communications of huge armies in Macedonia, Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and East Africa against attack by surface vessels, submarines and mines, whilst at the same time protecting the merchant shipping of ourselves, our Allies, and neutral Powers against similar perils, and assisting to secure the safety of the troops of the United States when they, in due course, were brought across the Atlantic?"

With that explanation of the unprecedented task which confronted the fighting Navy, it is necessary to take account, before turning to cold statistics, of the attitude of the personnel of the Merchant Navy which became a combatant service, fighting in its own defence. If, as had been anticipated in Germany, British merchant seamen had been frightened off the high seas by the repeated sinkings of their vessels, nothing could have saved the people of Britain from surrender, or the Allied nations and armies from defeat.

It is now known that the German military leaders at the end of the year 1916 were in sore straits as the direct result of the Franco-British

offensives on the Somme and at Verdun and the Brusilov offensive in the East. The peace-offer had only been a "blind" adopted as a subtle preliminary to unrestricted submarine warfare. "Things cannot be worse than they are now," said Hindenburg.¹ "The war must be brought to an end by the use of all means as soon as possible."

In so short a treatise as this it is out of the question to attempt a description of the tremendous struggle to avert disaster at sea. We can only refer to results, without describing the means by which, under Jellicoe's direction, they were attained.²

The losses in gross tonnage of British, Allied and neutral tonnage from submarine and mine attack stood at 324,016 in January 1917. Unrestricted warfare began on February 1st and by April the monthly loss had risen to 870,359. The total of British and foreign loss in the second quarter of 1917 reached the huge total of 2,236,934 tons; in the third quarter this was reduced to 1,494,473, and in the fourth quarter

¹ Conference at Pless, January 8th 1917. *German Official Documents* (Carnegie Collection), p. 1317.

² Books essential to the comprehensive study of the crisis of the sea-war are Lord Jellicoe's (see above), Fayle's *Sea-borne Trade*, Vol. III, Hurd's *Merchant Navy*, and Newbolt's *Naval Operations*, Vol. IV, all official.

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to 1,272,843. Thenceforward the losses steadily decreased. During the unrestricted campaign of 1917 as much mercantile tonnage was sunk in six weeks as was lost during the whole of the year 1915. The grave menace to the Allied cause was averted, but at great and enduring cost to the prosperity of Great Britain, a country that was supreme in naval, economic and financial sacrifice to the Allied cause.

Naval incidents in British home waters in 1917 included an action on January 23rd between the Harwich flotilla and the 6th German torpedo-boat flotilla in which the British destroyer *Simoon* was sunk ; a raid by German destroyers on Southwold and Wangford on the Suffolk coast (January 25th) ; others on Margate and Broadstairs (February 25th, repeated on March 18th). On March 16th the German commerce-raider *Leopard* was sunk by the *Achilles* in the North Sea ; on the 22nd the German raider *Moëwe* succeeded in returning to Kiel after her second cruise ; on April 3rd H.M.S. *Jason* was sunk by a mine off the west coast of Scotland. On April 20th a second German destroyer raid occurred in the Straits of Dover, and on the night of the 26th/27th another destroyer raid on Ramsgate. Over 600 submarine mines were swept up by British mine-sweepers during the month (the maximum for any month in the war

up to date). On May 7th the German airship L.22 was brought down by gun-fire from British light cruisers in the North Sea.

The months of April and May were marked by a declaration of war by the United States of America on April 6th; Admiral Sims, U.S.N., arrived in England on the 9th; a destroyer flotilla came to Queenstown on May 2nd from the U.S.A., to be followed on December 6th by the arrival at Scapa of a division of U.S. battle-ships to join the Grand Fleet.

The French cruiser *Kleber* was sunk by a mine off Brest on June 27th. The British battleship *Vanguard* was destroyed by internal explosion at Scapa Flow on July 9th. On August 3rd a mutiny broke out in the German fleet at Wilhelmshaven, and was suppressed. German submarines raided Scarborough on September 4th. On October 2nd the British cruiser *Drake* was sunk by a submarine in the North Channel. On November 2nd British light forces conducted a raid in the Kattegat, and on the 17th an action was fought by British light cruisers off Heligoland, the enemy escaping into harbour.

The ruthless nature of the German submarine and mining campaign in these waters in 1917 were illustrated by the sinking of the British hospital-ships *Glenarth Castle* in the Channel (March 1st), *Asturias* off Start Point (March 21st),

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Gloucester Castle in the Channel (March 30th), *Salta* off Havre (April 10th), and ambulance transports *Lanfranc* and *Donegal* in the Channel (April 17th). Hospital-ships were painted white with a large red cross and brilliantly illuminated by night. Two of the above were sunk by mines, the remainder torpedoed.

After experiments between Gibraltar (May 10th) and Newport News (May 24th) and England, a regular system of escorted convoys for merchant-ships was initiated from Hampton Roads (U.S.A.) on July 2nd. The first U.S.A. troops arrived in France on June 25th. On July 4th (Independence Day) a concerted attack by German submarines upon U.S.A. transports was defeated. Ponta Delgada in the Azores was shelled by a German submarine on the same day.

In the Baltic a mutiny in the Russian fleet on March 16th followed the outbreak of rebellion in Russia on March 12th. German troops captured Riga on September 4th. On October 11th operations began against various Baltic islands. Ösel was taken on the same day. The Russian battleship *Slava* was sunk in the Gulf of Riga on the 16th. By the 18th Moon Island and Dago Island had been taken, and the operations were completed on the 20th.

Before turning to naval incidents in more

distant seas in 1917, it is necessary to take account of a serious misadventure to two of the Scandinavian convoys which used Lerwick in the Shetland Islands as a place of assembly and distribution. Both were attacked, with heavy loss, by surface-ships, the first on October 17th by German light cruisers which sank the two escorting destroyers *Mary Rose* and *Strongbow*, the second on December 12th by German destroyers which sank the escorting destroyer *Partridge*, four escorting trawlers and the whole convoy, after damaging the other escorting destroyer *Pellew* and putting her out of action. The nation had been kept in ignorance of the heavy losses in merchant shipping from German submarines, and also of the slow progress made in defeating the menace. Though losses of these two convoys represented only a very small percentage of the total, their moral effect was considerable, as they occurred in waters believed by the public to be dominated by the Grand Fleet. It was not realised that 6,000 vessels had been convoyed between the Humber and Norway, with a total loss of about 70 ships,¹ since April.

In the course of the year in the Mediterranean and Black Sea the Russian battleship *Peresvyet* was sunk by a mine off Port Said on January

¹ Jellicoe, *The Crisis of the Naval War*, p. 125.

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4th, the French battleship *Danton* by a submarine on March 19th. On March 26th to 27th, and again on April 17th to 19th and October 27th to November 7th, British war vessels co-operated with the Army on the coast of Palestine near Gaza. Two Japanese destroyer flotillas arrived from the East on April 17th and joined the Allies in combating the submarine menace. On May 15th British drifters guarding the Otranto barrage at the outlet to the Adriatic were attacked by Austrian raiders, and 14 were sunk. The British hospital-ship *Dover Castle* was sunk by a submarine on May 29th, and another, the *Goorhka*, damaged by a mine on October 11th. On June 21st the crews of the Russian Black Sea fleet at Sevastopol mutinied. The Italians carried out a naval raid at Trieste, on December 10th and sunk the Austrian battleship *Wien*. On December 14th the French cruiser *Château Renault* was sunk by a submarine.

In the Far East and Pacific the Japanese battleship *Tsukuba* was sunk by internal explosion on January 14th. The German raider *Seeadler* was wrecked on Mopelia Island on August 2nd.

At sea, the year 1917 was notable for two reasons. The accession of the United States of America to the cause of the Allies had brought

about a better understanding between the English-speaking nations ¹ and better prospects of applying the tremendous force of sea-power to ensure victory ; and counter-measures, under the direction of the Admiralty, were becoming successful in averting the greatest peril with which British sea-power had ever been threatened. Neither the gravity of the crisis nor the success in averting the danger had been fully realised by the public, and the First Sea Lord, who had been responsible for the measures which saved the country, was called upon to resign.

Military Operations in 1917

In describing the control by political authorities over military operations in the year 1916, Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff at the time, wrote of the Asquith administration that "the General Staff were accorded suitable freedom of action in all matters lying within their sphere" and that "to this fact, perhaps more than to any other, may be largely attributed the military achievements

¹ Admiral Sims (U.S.N.) had for a time held the executive command at Queenstown. American destroyers had worked under a British Admiral (Bailey) there, and battleships under Beatty in the Grand Fleet.

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of the year, which left the position in all theatres of war infinitely more satisfactory and hopeful than it had been twelve months before." He added that the same mutual relations were not forthcoming in 1917, and he thought that the operations suffered to a corresponding degree.

The discussion of military campaigns, in the light of later happenings and knowledge, has no place in a short history devoted to a recital of "events and what caused them." The principal new factors affecting the military situation on land, in the year 1917, were: In the first place the reliance of Germany upon her ruthless submarine campaign, begun in February, to bring Britain to her knees and with Britain the whole Entente Alliance which depended for success upon her sea-power, her financial and economic strength, her merchant shipping, and ultimately upon her armies; secondly, the Russian revolution in March, followed in November by the Bolshevik *coup d'état* which, from the point of view of the military situation, turned an active ally into a passive enemy; and, thirdly, the accession of the United States to the cause of the Entente.

The principal military events on the Western Front were the failure to gain decisive victory by the French offensive, of which much was

expected, under Nivelle; the mutinies in the French Army and defeatism in the French nation which followed that failure; the successes gained by the British Army in Flanders; the attempted offensive and collapse of the Russian Army on the Eastern Front; the disaster to the Italian Army at Caporetto at the end of October; the successful advance in Mesopotamia and capture of Baghdad in March, and Allenby's triumphant offensive in Palestine resulting in the occupation of Jerusalem early in December and its successful defence at the end of the year.

In connexion with operations in the main theatre the fact will be recalled that a conference of Franco-British military representatives, presided over by Joffre, was held at Chantilly on November 15th 1916, to decide upon a plan of campaign for the coming year. That plan comprised in its entirety simultaneous offensives on all fronts, but the essence of the proposal was to exercise pressure continuously against the German Army during the winter months in order to prevent it from recovering from its experiences on the Somme and at Verdun; then, as early as possible in February 1917, to resume the Battle of the Somme, following up the successes already gained in that region. The British Army was to take a larger and the French a correspondingly smaller share in the

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operations.¹ The British were to attack on the frontage Bapaume-Vimy, while the northern group of French Armies attacked between the Somme and the Oise. The French central group would then attack on the Aisne front, and, finally, the main British effort would be transferred to the Flanders front. The main object of that attack would be to expel the enemy from the Belgian coast, and, by compelling him to evacuate his sea-bases and air-bases on and near that coast, to affect the situation in the submarine and air-bombing campaigns against Great Britain. The War Committee of the British Cabinet had stated that there was no measure to which they attached greater importance, and Haig conformed to their instruction.

On account of the political crises in Britain and in France in 1916, referred to in the preceding chapter, this plan was abandoned. Pressure upon the German Army was not kept up during the winter. No offensive was launched in February, and, being left unmolested, the Germans on the Somme position fell back for nearly 30 miles to their strongly fortified "Hinden-

¹ Resentment amongst French senior military officers, communicated to their politicians, at the idea of the British Army taking the leading part was a contributory cause of the removal of Joffre from the command.

burg " line, leaving a devastated country behind them. It remains for us to consider the events which led to this new development.

The British Prime Minister, at an inter-Allied Conference in Rome early in January 1917, put forward a plan of his own for a French-British-Italian offensive through the Julian Alps to Laibach and Vienna. Cadorna, the Italian Commander-in-Chief, was directed to prepare a plan in detail, but no further action was taken at that stage. At a meeting in London of the British War Cabinet on January 15th to 16th, Nivelle, the new French Commander-in-Chief, proposed that the French instead of the British Army should take the leading part in the coming Allied offensive, this offensive to be carried out in three phases: (1) attacks by British and French forces on the Arras front and to the south to exhaust the German reserves; (2) a main attack by the French on the Aisne, coming as a surprise, and intended to break through the enemy's position in 24 to 48 hours; (3) exploitation of the results, if successful, by an overwhelming advance of Allied Armies; if unsuccessful, an immediate breaking off of the attacks. In order to set free more French troops for the main operation, the British were to hold a longer frontage. The War Cabinet decided not to accept the advice of the General

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Staff but to accept the Nivelle plan, discarding the Joffre-Haig plan, and also the Lloyd George plan for an offensive against Austria (for which details were submitted by Cadorna ten days later).¹

An inter-Allied Conference was next summoned to meet at Calais on February 26th to settle a dispute about deficiency in transportation behind the British Army. France was represented there by Briand (Prime Minister), Lyautey (Minister of War), and by Nivelle; Britain by Lloyd George (Prime Minister), Haig and Robertson. Nivelle produced a plan (which took Haig and Robertson by surprise) for placing Haig under his orders, and this plan was accepted. Some friction and delays followed, but the matter was adjusted at subsequent conferences resulting in an agreement dated March 13th. Haig then agreed to carry out the Calais decision "in the spirit and in the letter" on the understanding that "the British Army and its Commander-in-Chief will be regarded by General Nivelle as allies and not as subordinates, except during the particular operations which he explained at the Calais Conference."

It has been necessary to dwell at some length upon these important matters before describing the aftermath. In so doing no attempt will be

¹ *Soldiers and Statesmen*, Vol. II, pp. 193-203.

made to balance the relative advantages of the plan drawn up at the conference held by Joffre in November 1916, and that drawn up by Nivelle and substituted by the War Cabinet and M. Briand's Government. Only one comment is necessary. Much time was lost by substituting political authorities for the military authority (French Army Headquarters under Joffre) which was previously responsible for combined plans. We have since learned from Ludendorff that at the end of 1916 the Germans "were completely exhausted on the Western Front" and that they "urgently needed a rest. The Army had been fought to a standstill, and was utterly worn out." The fear at Hindenburg's Headquarters was "that 'Somme fighting' would soon break out at various points on our (German) front, and that even our troops would not be able to face such attacks indefinitely, especially if the enemy gave us no time for rest and for the accumulation of material" (Ludendorff in *War Memories*), and here we are reminded of Napoleon's saying, in reference to military strategy, "Ask me for anything but time." This, however, is wisdom after the event.

The time sorely needed by Ludendorff was conceded. On March 13th the German Army began its retreat from the Somme, and by April 5th it was established behind the strongly

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defended Hindenburg line. Four days later (April 9th) the British Army, in accordance with Nivelle's orders, opened the Battle of Arras. Progress in the training and experience of the new British Armies since July 1916 was indicated by the results, taking the first 24 days of each battle for a comparison. During that period British troops engaged 32 German divisions at Arras in April 1917 compared with 16 on the Somme in July 1916. They took about 18,000 prisoners and 230 guns compared with 11,000 prisoners and 56 guns, and they advanced from 2 to 5 miles on a 20-mile front compared with $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles on a 6-mile front, so about four times as much ground was captured. Much progress had been made in artillery support, and some 3,500 guns were used for the purpose, compared with 2,090. The British sustained about 84,000 battle casualties at Arras in the same period compared with over 136,000 on the Somme.

The French attack on the Aisne was opened on April 16th, under most adverse conditions. Secrecy had not been achieved. During the last week in March the Briand Government had fallen. M. Ribot had become Premier and M. Painlevé Minister of War, and the new French Government would have been glad to see the offensive abandoned. New factors had been

introduced by the Russian revolution and by the entry of the United States into the arena. On April 6th the leading French Generals had been summoned to Compiègne to meet the President and Ministers in order to reconsider the plan, but Nivelle was allowed to proceed. The Battle of the Aisne lasted from April 16th to 20th and failed to achieve the expected breakthrough. At Nivelle's request Haig then continued the Battle of Arras until May 17th. In the battles of April and May the Allied Armies took 62,000 prisoners and nearly 450 guns, engaging 66 German divisions on the British and 57 on the French front.¹

Extravagant hopes in France of decisive success then gave way to deep dejection. There were mutinies in the army and there was much "defeatism" in the nation. Tremendous and prolonged sacrifices had been endured since August 1914 and the strain was nearly at breaking-point. Owing, however, to the foresight of Lord Kitchener in 1914, trained British troops of his new armies, raised on the Continental scale, were on the spot just in time to save the Allied cause on land while the British Navy was saving it at sea. On May 15th Pétain replaced Nivelle as Commander-in-Chief, and he suc-

¹ Sir Frederick Maurice, *The Nations of To-day*, Vol. I, p. 173.

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ceeded in course of time in nursing the French Army back to loyalty and to fighting trim. This process required time, so Pétain appealed to Haig to continue his offensives in order to keep the German Army engaged. News of the mutinies was kept even from British Army Commanders, and it was fortunate that the secret did not reach German Headquarters. Haig fought the Battle of Messines (June 7th to 14th), taking about 7,260 prisoners and 67 guns. On July 10th to 11th the Germans counter-attacked close to the coast at Nieuport. On July 31st Haig launched the Third Battle of Ypres. Attacks were kept up under appalling conditions of cold and mud until November 10th about Passchendaele, the object, besides taking the pressure off the French, being to drive the enemy away from his bases on the Belgian coast at a time when the result of the submarine campaign was hanging in the balance.¹ Over 20,500 prisoners and 55 guns were taken (at the expense of nearly 163,000 battle casualties) up to October 25th. The issue—failure to achieve the second purpose—was decided by an abnormally wet autumn and early winter.

¹ The First Sea Lord had reported in June on the "absolute necessity of turning the Germans out of Belgium at the earliest possible moment." (*Soldiers and Statesmen*, Vol. II, p. 243.)

Pétain, by carefully nursing his troops and by attacks with overwhelming artillery support on the Verdun front (August 20th to December 15th) and in the Battle of Malmaison which gained the Chemin des Dames ridge (October 23rd to November 1st), achieved his object. The morale of the French Army and nation was restored.

In the Battle of Cambrai (November 20th to December 3rd), Haig attacked again. By skilful use of tanks to ensure secrecy instead of the usual preliminary artillery bombardment to help the infantry forward, penetration, almost to Cambrai itself, was rapidly achieved. 10,500 prisoners and 142 guns had been captured, when on November 30th an attack by the enemy on both flanks of the salient completely altered the situation, which might have been further exploited had it not been for the transfer of 5 British and 6 French divisions to Italy after a disaster to be described in due course. As matters turned out the situation in Italy had been stabilised before the British divisions, which might have turned Cambrai into a decisive victory, arrived upon the scene. Haig had done all that he could to keep them for the purpose, but he was overruled by the War Cabinet.

The British Empire Army on the Western

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Front reached its maximum strength of over 2,044,600 (including 141,000 Canadians, 140,000 Australians and New Zealanders, and 7,000 South Africans) in August 1917, by which month native labour corps numbering 90,000 had also arrived. By the end of the year the strength had fallen to 1,828,600, with 142,000 native labour corps. 760,000 battle casualties had been suffered during the course of the operations. Man-power was beginning to fail for carrying on the Titanic struggle, and great hopes were entertained of help from beyond the Atlantic. The United States, having decided in April to give active aid to the cause of sanctity of international obligations, had at once passed a Bill for raising 500,000 men. On May 18th a compulsory service act had come into force.¹ On the other hand, it soon afterwards became evident that the abandonment by Russia of her obligations to her Allies would set free large masses of German troops for use on other fronts. The first of these troops were used actively against the Italian Army which, since Italy had joined in the war in 1915, had been attacking

¹ One curious result was that many men, born in Ireland, who had become citizens of the United States, were subject to compulsory service in the cause which their relatives in Ireland, exempt from such service, were doing their best to obstruct.

the Austrians on the Isonzo in order to achieve the avowed purpose for which Italy had joined the Allies (an extension of Italian territory at the expense of Austria).

On the Italian front the Tenth Battle of the Isonzo opened on May 12th and lasted until June 8th. The Eleventh Battle lasted from August 17th to September 12th. On September 21st Cadorna reported that his casualties, including sick, had numbered 720,000 since May. On October 24th an Austro-German offensive was launched on a narrow front in the Julian Alps. The blow took the Italians on the Isonzo in flank. Gorizia and Udine were lost on the 28th. A hasty retreat was enforced and between November 1st and 4th the Austro-Germans crossed the Tagliamento. On the 6th an Allied Conference was held at Rapallo and better means of establishing an inter-Allied conduct of the war on land were then initiated. The "Supreme War Council" which resulted will be described in due course. On November 7th General Diaz replaced Cadorna. On the 8th Vittorio Veneto was lost, and on the 11th the enemy reached the Piave. Fighting on the Asiago-Piave line continued until December 26th, without further disaster to the Italian Army.

On the Eastern Front (Russia and Rumania) the Austro-German offensive which was in pro-

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gress in the new year was brought to a conclusion on January 7th. Braila in Rumania was taken by the Germans on January 5th and by the 6th the last Rumanian and Russian forces had left the Dobrudja. In spite of the revolution in Russia and the abdication of the Tsar in March, a summer offensive was launched on June 29th. The earlier main battles in the Russo-Rumanian theatre were those of Brzezany, Koniuchy, and Zloczow (June 30th to July 6th), East Galicia (July 18th to 28th) and Marasesti in Rumania (July 22nd to September 3rd). General Kornilov replaced Brusilov as Commander-in-Chief on August 1st. On September 8th he headed a revolt and marched on Petrograd, but he was compelled to surrender on the 14th. The Germans captured Riga on September 1st to 5th. On November 8th the Bolsheviki executed a *coup d'état* in Petrograd and on the 13th they defeated the forces of Kerenski, head of the Provisional Government, and established a Dictatorship. Hostilities between Russia and Germany and Austria-Hungary were suspended between December 2nd and 8th, and between Rumania and the Central Powers on December 10th, the "Truce of Focsani" having been signed on the previous day. An armistice between Russia and the Central Powers took effect on December 17th.

In the Balkan and Salonika theatre, the principal events were an Allied offensive in the Monastir area (March 10th to 19th), a "Battle of the Vardar" (May 5th to 22nd) and the supersession of General Sarrail by General Guillaumat on December 22nd.

In Palestine General Murray's offensive operations began with the First and Second Battles of Gaza (March 26th to 27th and April 17th to 19th). On June 28th General Allenby took over the command. After a successful Third Battle of Gaza (October 27th to November 7th) Allenby advanced north and north-east, and after fighting the Battle of Nebi Samwil (November 17th to 24th) occupied Jerusalem on December 7th to 19th, entering the Holy City himself on foot on December 11th. The place was successfully defended against Turkish attacks on December 26th to 30th.

In Mesopotamia General Maude, after a month devoted to careful preparation, fought the successful Battle of Kut (January 9th to February 24th), pursued the retreating Turks to Baghdad and occupied that place on March 11th. The Russians were still active in West Persia, taking Kirmanshah on March 11th, Karuid on the 17th, Qasr-i-Shirin on the 25th, and Khanaqin, north-east of Baghdad, on April 4th; but military collapse in Russia itself caused a with-

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drawal which began on July 8th. Following the capture of Baghdad, the British occupied Samarra on April 23rd to 24th, and attacked Ramadi on July 11th to 14th and again, with success, on September 28th and 29th. They occupied Tikrit on November 6th. On November 18th General Maude, the successful commander, died of cholera.

Minor military operations in subsidiary theatres in Africa included, in East Africa, an action at Beho-Beho on January 3rd to 4th. On the 20th General Hoskins replaced General Smuts, and on May 30th General Van Deventer, who had been Smuts's right-hand man in the Boer War, succeeded to the command. Actions were fought at Narungombe on July 19th and Nyangao on October 16th to 19th. On November 25th Von Lettow-Vorbeck's force crossed the Rovuma River into Portuguese East Africa at Ngomano, and by the beginning of December the last Germans had left East Africa for Portuguese territory.

On the western frontier of Egypt the Senussi campaign was concluded on February 8th. In Arabia Wejd surrendered to Arab forces on January 24th. Aqaba was taken by Arabs on July 6th. On October 21st the Turks made an attack upon Petra.

During the course of the year there were minor

troubles on the north-west frontier of India, with fighting at Kharkwasta (May 9th to 10th) and in the Shahur Valley (June 19th to 24th).

An idea of the magnitude of the forces that were put into the field by the British Empire during the year 1917, in addition to the numbers already mentioned for the Western Front, can be gathered from the figures which follow (for the last day of the year): Italian front, 109,103; Mediterranean and Egypt, 266,163 and over 94,000 natives in labour units, etc.; Salonika, 180,841 and over 23,800 native labour, etc.; East Africa and Uganda, 51,726 (including 19,548 British and South African white troops) and nearly 156,000 native labour, etc.; Mesopotamia, 272,293 (including 117,471 British) and nearly 157,000 native labour, etc.; Aden, 8,219 (including 2,164 British) and about 2,500 native labour. The grand total in the field in military expeditionary forces was 2,716,931, with 575,340 native labour. There were over 1,149,400 troops in the United Kingdom in December 1917, including about 770,000 classed as "trained."

No comprehensive plans for military operations in 1918 had been drawn up and approved by the end of the year. On July 25th General Foch (who had been appointed Chief of the French General Staff in May), Robertson and

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Pétain had met in Paris and they had studied the steps that were necessary to confront the great force which the Germans, reinforced by troops set free from the Eastern Front, could bring to bear against the Armies of the Entente on the Western Front in 1918. They recommended the establishment of an inter-Allied military body (*organe militaire*) to study and prepare plans for co-operation between the Allied Armies. Their proposal met with no success.¹

The War in the Air, 1917

Fifty per cent. of the casualties suffered in the United Kingdom from air-raids occurred in the year 1917. The anti-aircraft system in force from February 1916 was that the Navy dealt with hostile aircraft attempting to reach the British coast and that the Army was responsible for defence measures when they arrived. Air-raids caused the detention of a considerable military force in the United Kingdom.

Taking principal events affecting the air-war over England in chronological order: One German airship, returning from a visit to England, was destroyed at Compiègne on March 17th. May 7th was the date of the first aeroplane-

¹ Marshal Foch, *Les Deux Batailles de la Marne*, p. 100.

raid by night; only one machine came over, apparently to reconnoitre. On the 14th the German airship L.22 (see under Naval Operations) was brought down by gun-fire from war-ships. The first great aeroplane raid to cause heavy casualties (290, half of them civilians) happened on May 25th, in Kent and at Folkestone. On June 5th aeroplanes raided Sheerness and naval establishments on the Medway. A great daylight aeroplane raid was made on London on the 13th, resulting in 590 casualties, nearly all civilians. On the next day the airship L.43 was brought down in the North Sea, and on the 17th L.48 was destroyed by an aeroplane at Theberton in Suffolk. Another severe aeroplane raid on Margate and London on July 7th caused 250 casualties, mostly civilians. This was the last of the daylight aeroplane raids on London.

On August 21st the airship L.23 was destroyed in the North Sea. The last daylight aeroplane raid on England was made on the Kent coast on August 22nd. Anti-aircraft measures gradually became more effective. On September 2nd and 3rd the first severe aeroplane raids by moonlight were made in Kent, causing about 480 casualties, mostly military. On September 4th the first night aeroplane raid in force was made on London. October 19th was the date

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of a great airship raid on London. Anti-aircraft defences kept the destroyers at a great height, where a great storm was encountered. Some were driven to France, others to the Alps and to the Mediterranean. On the next day L.41 was shot down at St. Clément, L.45 at Laragne, L.49 at Bourbonne-les-Bains. On the 21st, L.50 was shot down in the Mediterranean. This was the last airship raid on London. A balloon "apron" of steel cables over London, a system of night patrols by aeroplanes, and defence measures elsewhere became more and more effective.

The total casualties in the United Kingdom resulting from airship raids numbered 115 : 35 civilians, including 29 women and children, were killed and 70 injured, compared with 5 soldiers and sailors killed and 5 injured.

The aeroplane raids were more deadly : 436 civilians (including 123 women and 110 children) were killed and 1,211 injured ; 219 soldiers and sailors were killed and 342 injured.

Through the devoted service of the Royal Flying Corps to the Army the enemy never regained the predominance in the air which had been his from October 1915 to April 1916. During the year 1917, as construction and pilots increased, the need became apparent for an air force distinct from Army and from Navy. An

Air Force Constitution Act was passed on November 29th, followed, on December 21st, by an Order in Council constituting an Air Council to take the place of the Air Board which had been formed in May 1916.

While it must be acknowledged that in 1917, the year in which results from air-raids were severely felt, these caused some considerable delay in the output of munitions, and though a certain amount of panic occurred, chiefly amongst the dense alien population in the East End of London, the general effect of waging warfare by such methods against the civilian population was to stiffen the national determination to overcome "baby-killing" foes. The general attitude of town-dwellers can be gathered from the fact that, in spite of discomforts in travel due to darkened streets (crossed at the risk of being run down by motor vehicles with headlights hardly visible), theatres and places of entertainment were well attended and notes on programmes explaining to audiences the best procedure in the event of air-raids seemed to afford no deterrent to enjoyment.

Political, Economic, and Financial Conditions in 1917

In July 1917 King George V decided to change the name of the Royal House and to relinquish

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all German titles and dignities. The year, which marked a great crisis in the war, provided so many political developments that it will be well to deal first with one which had a permanent effect upon subsequent developments in the British Empire. Immediately after the establishment of the Lloyd George Coalition Government in December 1916, it was decided to summon a Conference of representatives of the whole British Empire, to meet in London. Prompt action was taken upon this decision and the "Imperial War Conference" met first on March 20th 1917. The meetings were continued until June, and the success achieved in co-ordinating effort and in mutual understanding between the Governments of the nations grouped in the Empire was so conspicuous that it was decided to repeat the experience annually. In addition to the "Conference," attended by several Ministers representing different departments of government, meetings were also held of an Empire "Cabinet," attended by all the Premiers. General Smuts, who had taken a leading part in some of the discussions, remained in England as the sixth member of the "Imperial" War Cabinet.

The report of the Commission which investigated the causes and conduct of the Mesopotamia campaign was published in July, and led

to the resignation of Mr. Austen Chamberlain from the India Office. In August difficulties arose over the question of the attendance of British representatives at an International Labour Conference at Stockholm. On August 10th the Labour Party decided to send delegates. On the 11th Mr. Arthur Henderson resigned his membership of the War Cabinet. On the 13th the Labour delegates for Stockholm were refused passports by direction of the Government. These incidents led to a reconstruction of the Government. Sir Edward Carson joined the War Cabinet and Mr. G. E. Barnes took the place of Mr. Arthur Henderson as Labour representative on that body. Mr. Churchill became Minister of Munitions.

Events of importance elsewhere in the Empire included the establishment of a federal "War Government" in Australia, the passage through the Canadian Parliament (July 6th) of a Conscription Bill, the formation of a Canadian War Cabinet on October 12th and introduction of compulsory service for Canadians on the same day.

While progress was made in co-ordination of national and of Empire war-policy and effort, events in the Allied political, economic, and military spheres in the year 1917 disclosed an urgent need for closer co-operation between the Entente Governments to ensure continuity of

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policy in which special difficulties were caused by changes of government in France, by the revolution in Russia, and by the "association" of the United States with the Allies. The political situation in Greece caused additional complications, but the culminating influence was the disaster to the Italian Army at Caporetto, which led, at the suggestion of the British representatives, to the establishment of the "Supreme War Council" which was definitely established on a permanent basis at Versailles on December 1st. On the 2nd the military situation was vastly improved for the Central Powers by the suspension of hostilities with Russia, and nine days later Rumania followed suit. Combination of military effort between the Allied and Associated Powers to meet the new menace of 1918 then became the supreme requirement. French war-aims were officially proclaimed on December 28th.

The changes of government in France began on March 17th when M. Briand resigned the posts of Premier and Foreign Minister, and General Roques that of Minister of War. M. Ribot became Premier and M. Painlevé War Minister. On April 29th General Pétain became Chief of the General Staff in Paris, and when, on May 15th, he relieved Nivelle in the field, he was succeeded in that office by General Foch,

whose return to active employment was destined to have far-reaching results. On September 9th Ribot resigned the Premiership, his place being taken by Painlevé, who held the office until November 14th. November 16th was the date of the most important occurrence in Franco-British relationship, when M. Clemenceau became Premier and War Minister, General Foch, as Chief of the General Staff, remaining as his adviser in military matters.

The Russian tragedy began with the revolution on March 12th, followed on the 14th by the establishment of a Provisional Government and on the 15th by the abdication of the Tsar Nicholas II. On the 22nd the Provisional Government was recognized by Great Britain, France, Italy, the United States, Rumania and Switzerland. On April 9th the Russian Government issued to the Allies a proclamation in favour of the self-determination of peoples and a durable peace. Kerenski became War Minister on May 16th, and on the 19th a declaration repudiating a separate peace was issued. A German offer of an Armistice was refused on June 9th. (The crews of the Black Sea Fleet mutinied on the 21st at Sevastopol.) Kerenski became acting Prime Minister in place of Prince Lvov on July 19th and Prime Minister on August 6th. General Kornilov, who headed a revolt on

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September 8th, was proclaimed a traitor on the 10th, and Kerenski then became Dictator. On the 15th Russia was proclaimed as a Republic. Kornilov's revolt had collapsed altogether on the 13th. The Kerenski regime was destined to be short-lived. Lenin and Trotsky seized power by a *coup d'état* in Petrograd on November 8th. Kerenski's supporters were defeated on the 13th and he fled from the country on the 15th. Poland (September 1st) had already been granted a temporary constitution, and Trans-Caucasia (September 20th) had become a Federal Republic. A People's Republic of the Ukraine was declared on November 20th. On the next day the Lenin Government opened negotiations with the Central Powers for the Armistice. Estonia proclaimed independence on November 28th and Finland on December 6th. Hostilities with the Central Powers were suspended on the same day, and a truce came into force on the next day. The Russian Constituent Assembly was dispersed on December 12th, the Bolsheviks assuming autocratic powers. Peace negotiations were opened at Brest-Litovsk on December 22nd, after the conclusion, on the 15th, of an Armistice from December 14th to January 17th. In Bessarabia an independent Republic of Moldavia was proclaimed at Kishinev on December 23rd.

Hostilities between Rumania and the Central Powers ceased on December 10th.

Whilst Germany was thus relieved from military pressure from the East, the action of her submarines at sea raised new enemies elsewhere. Events affecting the United States of America throughout the year can be briefly summarised. On January 10th the Entente Powers replied, stating their war-aims, to President Wilson's note of December 18th 1916. On the 11th the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments, unable to formulate any agreed war-aims, repudiated responsibility for continuing the war, which they intended to prosecute to a successful conclusion. On January 19th the German Government instructed their Minister in Mexico to negotiate an alliance between Mexico and Japan against the United States.¹ On February 1st the German unrestricted submarine campaign was launched in accordance with an announcement on January 31st. On the 3rd the United States severed diplomatic relations. On February 26th President Wilson asked Congress for powers to arm merchant ships (a measure that was adopted on March 12th). On February 27th the President stated that the sinking of the *Laconia* ² was the overt act for which he

¹ In the event of war. ² British merchant ship, sunk by submarine, February 25th 1917.

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had been waiting. On the 28th the German proposal to Mexico to contract an alliance against the United States was made public in the American Press, causing much indignation. On April 6th the United States declared war against Germany. On the 28th a Bill to raise 500,000 men was passed. On May 18th a compulsory service act became law and on the 19th an announcement of an intention to send a division to France was issued. (The first advanced troops reached Europe on June 25th.) On December 7th the United States declared war upon Austria-Hungary, diplomatic relations having been severed by that country on April 8th, by Bulgaria on April 10th, and by Turkey on April 28th.

Other countries which severed diplomatic relations or declared war (against Germany) during the year 1917 were China (March 14th and August 14th), Cuba and Panama (April 7th), Brazil (April 11th and October 26th), Bolivia (April 13th), Guatemala (April 27th), Liberia (May 5th and August 4th), Honduras (May 17th), Nicaragua (May 18th), San Domingo (June 11th), Haiti (June 16th), Siam (July 22nd), Costa Rica (September 21st), Peru (October 5th), Uruguay (October 7th) and Ecuador (December 7th).

Pressure by the Entente Allies compelled the abdication of King Constantine of Greece in

favour of Prince Alexander, his second son, on June 12th. M. Venizelos assumed power at Athens on the 27th and on the same day the declaration of war by his Provisional Government at Salonika (November 23rd 1916) became effective for the whole of Greece. A state of war against Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria was also established.

The Scandinavian countries contented themselves with a joint protest (February 13th) against German unrestricted submarine warfare, Norway (February 1st) having first forbidden all submarines to use Norwegian territorial waters.

The year 1917 was more fruitful in inter-Allied conferences than it was in stabilising inter-Allied military policy. A Conference was held at Rome (January 5th to 7th). On January 6th an inter-Allied chartering committee for shipping was established. Between January 17th and February 20th an inter-Allied *Commission de Ravitaillement* was sitting in Petrograd. An Anglo-French Conference on the situation in Greece was held in London on May 28th. Another, on the Russian and Balkan situation, was held on July 25th to 26th, and on the 27th the French and Italians agreed about their respective spheres of influence in Asia Minor. On September 4th London was the scene of an Anglo-French Conference about sending help to Italy, and on the 25th another was held at

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Boulogne on the military situation. An agreement was arrived at between Britain, France and Italy on November 3rd about the provision of the mercantile tonnage required for an Allied food programme, a subject which had been brought to the front by depredations of German submarines. These affected most seriously the population of the United Kingdom, the most dependent upon external supplies. The Rapallo Conference of November 7th is dealt with elsewhere. An Allied Naval Conference met in London on November 30th, and at a Conference in Paris on December 3rd it was decided to establish an Allied Maritime Transport Council. The sacrifice of so many merchant ships and heroic seamen by enemy action, loans of shipping to the Allied cause, and the demands of armies employed in distant campaigns, began in 1917 to cause in the United Kingdom a demand for universal sacrifice.¹ Battle casualties were occurring by the hundred thousand in the armies at the front, but the need for universal sacrifice by the civil population to avert defeat was not fully realised. The policy that was adopted was to award an additional bonus or rise of wages to strikers in industries, even when unauthorised

¹ In the concluding portion of this chapter some use has been made of pages 250-260 of *The Nations of To-Day*, Vol. I (Hodder and Stoughton).

by their Unions. These strikes continued to occur in spite of incessant advances in wages, reduction in hours and equal distribution of food. Some, the Royal Family setting a fine example, willingly faced personal sacrifice, and, in spite of industrial unrest, there was no indication in any class taken as a whole of weakening of purpose. The position has best been described by Professor A. F. Pollard in a telling passage of his *Short History of the War* :

“The intense agitation of war brought out the worst in the bad as well as the best in the good. Much that came to the top was scum, while often the salt of the earth went under. Treason blotted the pages illumined by heroism, and profiteering tarnished peoples redeemed by the devotion of their sons. Wastefulness and corruption ran riot even in Government circles, while hundreds of thousands of humble men and women voluntarily limited and starved themselves beyond the rigid requirements of the law. Lip-service was paid to the principle of equality in sacrifice, and some efforts were made to enforce it. But they failed to remove the inexorable inequalities of human fate, and the war which brought death and distress to millions brought to others ease and honours, wealth and fame.”¹

¹ *A Short History of the Great War*. A. F. Pollard (Methuen).

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The control of civilian workers did not necessitate any form of compulsion, but all the expedients for meeting the increased demands for manpower would have failed if it had not been for the voluntary co-operation of women. From the very beginning they had nobly risen to the occasion. Agriculture depended on their work ; so did banks and business concerns. In engineering trades the proportion of women to men had risen to 4 to 1 by the end of 1916, and 80,000 women had volunteered for menial work in voluntary aid detachments in the hospitals. Many were driving ambulance cars and other vehicles both at home and abroad. In 1917 their activities were greatly extended in such organisations as the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (W.A.A.C.), the Women's Royal Naval Service (W.R.N.S.), and the Women's Royal Air Force (W.R.A.F.). Men were almost entirely replaced by women as motor-drivers, tram-conductors, railway porters, gardeners, cleaners, and other unusual employments, and towards the end of the year there came in acknowledgment a promise of the franchise.

Before passing to other matters, it is desirable to note in chronological order a few more of the occurrences in the political sphere in 1917. On February 14th the British Government told the Japanese that Britain would support the Jap-

anese claim to Pacific Islands north of the Equator if Japan would reciprocate for British Empire claims south of the Equator. On the 15th a pledge was given in the House of Commons that the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France was an object for Britain in the war. On March 31st the Emperor of Austria made overtures for peace to the French President. Italy proclaimed a Protectorate over Albania on June 3rd, and on June 8th occupied Janina, in Greek territory. Entente forces occupied Corinth and Larissa (Greek) on June 12th. Dr. Michaelis replaced Von Bethmann-Hollweg as German Chancellor on July 14th. On July 19th the Reichstag passed a resolution about German war-aims. Post-war disclosures by Ludendorff and others indicate that it was during that week that the military authorities in Germany grasped supreme power, in all spheres, over the conduct of the war and held it until the military collapse in 1918. On October 9th the Sultan of Egypt (Hussein Kamel) abdicated in favour of his brother Ahmed Fuad. On the 29th Orlando succeeded Boselli as Italian Premier. On the 30th Count Hertling succeeded Michaelis as German Chancellor. A revolution occurred in Portugal on December 11th. On December 17th the British Government gave in writing to the King of the Hedjaz an assurance of the future

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independence of the Arab people, an incident which led to an aftermath of great historical importance.

In the financial sphere in Britain the third war loan of January 5th to February 19th met with a patriotic response and brought in £962,200,000 of new money in small and large sums, from about $5\frac{1}{4}$ million persons. In October National War Bonds, strongly supported by the municipalities of the great industrial towns, were supported with the same enthusiasm, but the heavy demands upon the public purse rose in proportion. A vote of credit was needed for £550,000,000 in February, and another for £650,000,000 in July. The daily war expenditure on Army, Navy, aircraft, munitions and shipping amounted to about £6,650,000 between April 1st and September 29th 1917. Between November 1st 1917 and January 19th 1918 the figure stood at £7,517,000 *per diem*, the maximum that was reached during the war.¹

Summary

First in importance amongst the events of 1917 can be put the failure by a narrow margin of the German submarine campaign to bring about the collapse of the British war effort in

¹ *Statistics of Military Effort of the British Empire*, p. 561.

all spheres by destroying merchant shipping. On the other hand, access to the granaries of Rumania and the Ukraine seemed likely to relieve, for the time being, the effect of the pressure of Allied Sea-Power upon Germany. Grave anxiety was felt amongst the Allies about the military situation on land, owing to the reinforcement of the German Armies in the West by troops set free from the Eastern Front. The United States of America, it is true, had begun to raise a large army by compulsory service, but it seemed doubtful whether enough American troops would be in France in time to adjust the balance, to make up for Anglo-French contingents sent to help Italy in her adversity and for the other diversions of force to take part in distant campaigns. Allenby's successes in Palestine and Maude's in Mesopotamia had, nevertheless, some influence upon public opinion, which had borne with patience the disappointments of a year which had opened in promise and closed in anxiety.

CHAPTER VI

1918

CONTROL—NAVAL OPERATIONS—MILITARY OPERATIONS—WAR IN THE AIR—POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS—SUMMARY.

Control

THE most marked features of Allied control over war operations in 1918 were the Supreme War Council, and, from the end of March, the unified "command" so called, although General Foch, who exercised it, was vested only with powers of "co-ordination" and later of "direction," never of commanding in the usual sense. This measure, like the first, was enforced upon the Allied Governments by an impending disaster. In February 1918 the expedient had been tried of establishing an Executive Military Committee under the direction of the Supreme War Council, but the value of this body ceased as soon as the unified command proved its value and the Committee was abolished early in May.

The custom of diplomacy by conference, which was established by the Supreme War Council and its subordinate bodies, was highly successful on the whole. It tended to expedite agreements and decisions in the political, financial and economic spheres, but neither the Council itself nor its Executive (Military) Committee was satisfactory as an organ for directing military operations in the field. Its principal successes were achieved in helping to secure general co-ordination of war effort, equitable distribution of shipping, raw material, munitions, food, man-power, and so forth, in addition to improved relationship over political issues.

In Great Britain itself, new Ministries were created at various periods; For Munitions (July 2nd 1915); Blockade (February 23rd 1916); Labour (December 11th 1916); Food, Pensions, and Shipping (December 22nd 1916); Reconstruction (August 21st 1917); National Service (November 1st 1917); Air (January 2nd 1918) and Information (February 21st 1918). These, with a co-ordinating influence applied by a Home Affairs Committee presided over by Lord Ernle, relieved the Cabinet as a whole of much of its responsibility and helped to leave the War Cabinet free to deal with major issues affecting the conduct of the war. Generally speaking, the principle in force was

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to leave the several Government Departments free to conduct their own affairs in collusion, if necessary, with other Departments concerned, only referring to higher authority in cases of doubt or of disagreement.

Naval Operations in 1918

The control over naval operations remained unaltered during the last stage of the war with Sir Eric Geddes (appointed in September 6th 1917) as First Lord and Sir Rosslyn Wemyss (appointed on December 27th 1917) as First Sea Lord.

When Lord Jellicoe vacated the post of First Sea Lord at the end of December, the submarine menace was already being mastered, and this process continued. The total number of German submarines that had been sunk in 1917 was 66. In the first ten months of 1918 the total number sunk was 84, of which 19 were sunk in October. The total sunk in the year was 88 and the total in the whole war was 200, out of about 375 German U-Boats which were devoted to this form of warfare. Minelaying by submarines was a particularly difficult problem to deal with, and a large proportion of the losses of war vessels herein mentioned as having been sunk by striking mines was due to this cause. The devoted

work of the crews of the small mine-sweeping craft had much effect in averting the menace. The maximum number of mines (over 600) destroyed by them had been reached in April 1917, and the total number swept up during the war exceeded 10,000. The personnel employed in this dangerous work numbered not far short of 20,000. Apart from the actual removal of the mines by the mine-sweepers losses were much reduced by the use of new inventions which were called "paravanes" when applied to men-of-war and "otters" when used by merchant ships. These appliances deflected the mines from the ships' bottoms, cut the moorings, and caused the mines to come to the surface, where they were destroyed by gun-fire.

The total number of British, Allied, and neutral merchant-ships destroyed by submarines using gun or torpedo in 1917 amounted to 679, with a total gross tonnage of 5,639,000. The figures for 1918 were 186 and 2,561,000 respectively. The figure for the whole war amounted to a total of 5,408 merchant ships, with a gross tonnage of 11,189,000. In 1917, 1,052 British merchant ships and 200 fishing vessels were lost; the figures for 1918 (10 months) were 527 and 76 respectively. By the early summer of 1918 the rate of output

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of new shipping began to exceed the rate of destruction—but crews were the crucial factor. The originators of the campaign had hoped that the experience to which so many merchant seamen were exposed would cause the remainder to refuse to go to sea. The contrary effect was produced. Their fighting spirit was engendered and strengthened, and in the end Britain owed her salvation as much to her merchant seamen as to their comrades of the R.N. The casualties at sea to merchant seamen and civilians numbered two-thirds of those suffered by the Navy.

The possession by the Germans of the Belgian coast, especially of the defended harbours of Zeebrugge and Ostend, greatly facilitated the operations of their submarines. Only a brief reference can here be made to a brilliant naval raid upon Zeebrugge and Ostend during the night of April 22nd/23rd 1918. It was carried out by auxiliary vessels and obsolete cruisers, some of which, filled with concrete, were used as blockships to be run into the narrow channels which gave access to canals. Escorts of destroyers and of other vessels were provided. Two blockships were sunk in the canal entrance at Zeebrugge, whilst storming parties of seamen and marines landed with great gallantry on the Mole to divert the attention of the garrisons of the batteries from the main opera-

tion. At the same time access to the Mole by enemy reinforcements was cut off by blowing up a submarine loaded with explosives under a bridge between the shore and the Mole. At Ostend two blockships were run ashore and blown up, leaving the channel clear, so eighteen days later the *Vindictive* was taken there and sunk across the entrance. These successful results can partly be attributed to keeping the operations secret, and partly to the long period that was devoted to careful preparation. Apart from their definite effect upon the submarine menace (which was considerable), these daring raids under Sir Roger Keyes put heart into the nation at a time of acute anxiety caused by events on land on the Western Front.

As affecting that front, the principal feat performed by the British Royal and Mercantile Navies in 1918 was that of conveying in safety across the Atlantic the American troops, which settled in favour of the Allies the urgent problem of man-power in the armies that were fighting at the decisive point. By the end of September nearly 947,000 American troops were transported to France in British vessels, about 250,000 tons of imports to the United Kingdom per month from the United States being sacrificed for the purpose. These figures take no account of the munitions, timber, and other

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essentials for the American Army or of 150,000 tons of bunker coal for the American Navy in European waters that were carried in British ships, and we can here take note of the fact that, between August 1914 and the end of November 1918, the safe transport across the sea of military personnel numbering over 23,700,000, about 46,500,000 tons of British military stores, 5,500,000 tons of stores for Allies, and 2,240,000 animals, represented only a part of the contribution to victory of the British naval effort. As a result of the military efforts which were thus made possible, the final defeat of the German Army, superimposed upon the pressure which Sea-Power exercised against the German people, caused the surrender of all German men-of-war. The first contingent of surrendered submarines arrived at Harwich on November 20th and on the next day the High Seas Fleet capitulated to Admiral Beatty at Rosyth before proceeding to Scapa Flow in the Orkneys for internment.

In British home waters, the Baltic and the Atlantic, the minor naval events during the year 1918 included on January 4th the sinking of the British hospital-ship *Rewa* in the Bristol Channel; on the 14th a German destroyer-raid on Yarmouth. The S.S. *Tuscania*, carrying American troops, was sunk by a submarine off

the Irish coast on February 5th. The third German destroyer-raid in the Straits of Dover occurred on the night of February 15th/16th, and on the 16th Dover itself was shelled by a German submarine. On the 24th the raider *Wolff* reached Germany safely. On the 26th the *Glenarth Castle*, and on March 10th the *Guildford Castle*, British hospital-ships, were sunk by submarines in the Bristol Channel. The Allied Maritime Transport Council met for the first time on March 11th, and on the 20th an Allied Blockade Committee was established. On the 21st a destroyer action occurred between Allied and German flotillas in the North Sea.

Reval and Pernau in the Baltic were taken by the Germans on February 25th, on March 2nd they landed on the Aaland Islands and on April 3rd at Hangö in South Finland. British submarines lying at Helsingfors were destroyed on the same day to avoid capture. German forces arrived there on the 16th. They landed at Viborg in South Finland on the 30th. On the African Atlantic coast a German submarine bombarded Monrovia in Liberia on April 10th.

On April 15th British light forces conducted a raid in the Cattegat. The Zeebrugge and Ostend raids on April 22nd to 23rd and May 9th to 10th have been described above. On May 15th a German submarine raided St.

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Kilda. The Dutch *Konigen Regentes* and British *Llandovery Castle*, both of them hospital-ships, were sunk on June 6th and 27th, this form of frightfulness increasing the determination in Britain to hold on for victory at whatever cost. The British ambulance transport *Warilda* was sunk by a submarine on August 3rd. On the 13th Vice-Admiral Von Behnke, who had commanded a division of battleships at Jutland in 1916, became Minister of Marine in Germany. On September 16th H.M.S. *Glatton* and on October 10th the Irish mail boat *Leinster* were sunk by submarines.

In the Baltic and White Seas during the same period a force of British marines landed at Pechenga on June 4th; Kem, North Russia, was occupied by Allied forces on the 7th, and on the 23rd the British landed at Murmansk in the White Sea. On the 29th and 30th they seized the railway line from that place to Suroki. Allied troops occupied Archangel by request on August 2nd.

In the Mediterranean littoral there were some naval activities, as also on the coasts of the Black Sea, as soon as Russia began to weaken. In a naval action off the Dardanelles on January 20th the *Breslau*, German-Turkish light cruiser, and H.M.S. *Beagle* were sunk and the celebrated armoured cruiser *Goeben*, whose escape to Con-

stantinople in 1914 had had so widespread a political influence upon the issues at stake, struck a mine and was beached inside the "Narrows," but she was refloated on the next day. A Turkish flotilla in the Dead Sea fell into the hands of Arab camel corps on January 27th, at El Mezraa.

Trebizond fell to the Turks on February 24th, Odessa and Nicolaiev to the Germans on March 13th and 17th, Batum to the Turks on April 15th. By May 1st the Germans were in Sevastopol, in possession of part of the Russian Black Sea fleet. On the 14th the Italians raided Pola Harbour, the Austrian base in the Adriatic. The Austrian battleship *Suzent Istvan* was sunk by an Italian motor-launch off Permuda Island on June 10th. Meanwhile, in the Black Sea, German troops were landed at Poti in Georgia on June 8th. On the 18th the Russian battleship *Svobodnaya* was sunk by her crew to avoid capture.

In the Mediterranean Haifa and Acre were occupied by British troops on September 23rd, Beirut by French troops on October 7th, Tripoli (Syria) by Allied forces on the 13th, and Alexandretta on November 9th.

A net barrage was constructed across the Otranto Straits leading to the Adriatic on October 1st. Durazzo was bombarded by Allied

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warships on the 2nd and retaken by the Italians on the 14th. On the 31st the Austro-Hungarian fleet was handed over by the Emperor to the Yugo-Slav National Council. On November 1st the Austrian battleship *Viribus Unitis* was sunk in Pola Harbour. The Italians occupied Trieste on November 3rd, Antivari on the 4th, and Fiume on the 5th.

The Mediterranean was the scene, on November 2nd, of the last sinkings of British merchant ships (*Surada* and *Murcia*) by submarines; a further attack on November 7th on the *Sarpedon* was unsuccessful.

Baku on the Caspian was in British hands on August 4th, but the place was reoccupied by the Turks on September 15th, the British withdrawing until November 17th, when it was retaken by them.

Other events at sea, during the year in which victory for the Allies all over the world was gained by the decisive defeat of the German Army, included the sinking of the U.S. cruiser *San Diego* by a mine off Fire Island on June 19th, and of the French cruiser *Dupetit Thouars* by a submarine on August 7th, both in the Atlantic, in which Cape Trafalgar was the scene on November 9th of the sinking of H.M.S. *Britannia* by a submarine.

In the Pacific and Far East British and

Japanese marines landed at Vladivostok on April 5th, followed by troops on August 3rd and 11th. China and Japan agreed to co-operate at sea on May 19th. The Japanese battleship *Kawachi* was sunk by an internal explosion on July 12th.

The defeat of the main German Army caused Ostend to be evacuated by October 17th, Zeebrugge by the 19th, and the whole Belgian coast by the 20th. An attempt by the High Seas Fleet to make a final sally was frustrated by mutinies in the crews at Kiel and elsewhere on November 3rd, and the *coup de grâce* was administered in Marshal Foch's railway coach in the Compiègne Forest where the dictated terms of the Armistice were accepted early on November 11th. To the history of the events on land which led to that conclusion we will now turn our attention.

Military Operations in 1918

The years 1915, 1916 and 1917 opened with plans already in existence for campaigns on the Western Front. They had been drawn up by French Army Headquarters in consultation with the British Commander-in-Chief. Those for 1915 and 1916 had been approved by the political authorities, who, on the advice of General Nivelle, substituted his plan for the

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campaign of 1917 for the one submitted by Joffre and Haig. As the result of the failure of the Nivelle plan to fulfil expectations, and the condition in which it left the French Army after the long years of supreme sacrifice, it seemed reasonable that British opinion should carry the chief weight in future war-plans. The British Empire was bearing the heaviest burden and making the largest contribution to war-effort. In these circumstances the British General Staff put forward, on November 19th 1917, a submission that, in view of the German menace, the best policy for 1918 would be to effect the fullest possible concentration in the West, limiting commitments elsewhere to the minimum needed to defend vital interests.¹

These views did not coincide with those of the Prime Minister (Mr. Lloyd George), and, after some discussion in the War Cabinet, the question was referred to the Supreme War Council, who, at their first meeting on December 1st, referred it to their "technical advisers," including General Weygand, who represented the French General Staff while General Wilson, the British representative, was an independent military authority. Further submissions were sent in by General Robertson, Chief of the British General Staff, on December 26th and

¹ *Soldiers and Statesmen*, Vol. II, pp. 264-271.

29th, but no Allied policy had been definitely determined by the end of the year. ① "The War Cabinet desired the defeat of the Turks . . . the General Staff desired full concentration against the Germans in the West."¹

On February 1st the technical advisers to the Supreme War Council replied to the General Staff Memorandum of November 19th that, "Subject to the Western Front being made secure, a decisive offensive should be undertaken against Turkey with a view to the annihilation of the Turkish Armies and the collapse of the Turkish resistance." This was accepted by the Supreme War Council on the motion of Mr. Lloyd George, after his Chief of the General Staff had expressed his dissent. At the same meeting it was decided that the technical advisers should become an "Executive Committee," presided over by General Foch, with powers to determine the strength, disposition and employment of a strategical reserve of Allied troops, and to hold authority above that of the Allied Commanders-in-Chief in these matters. While the German Army in the West was constantly being reinforced from the East, further time was lost in discussions until, at a meeting of the Supreme War Council in London on March 14th, it was decided to

¹ *Soldiers and Statesmen*, Vol. II, p. 286.

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give up the proposed Allied reserve, General Foch registering a protest. Seven days later, on March 21st, the German blow fell, mainly upon the Fifth British Army which was covering Amiens.

The Allied Commanders-in-Chief, Haig and Pétain, had come on their own initiative to an agreement for mutual support: "If the attack develops against the British front, the French Army will send a strong army of five divisions of infantry, four divisions of cavalry, and three regiments of infantry. If it falls on the French group, Marshal Haig will send to the support of General Pétain six to eight of his divisions with an equal number of groups of artillery."¹ To Haig's promise was attached a condition that the help specified could not be sent to the French if the British front was being heavily attacked.

In the actual event the situation became so critical by March 25th that it seemed possible that the Germans might reach Amiens. Pétain, in view of the rapid progress that was being made by the enemy about Montdidier, felt that, instead of sending the promised reinforcements to Haig, it was above all things necessary

¹ *Biography of the late Marshal Foch*, by Sir G. Aston (Hutchinson), p. 199. American Edition (Macmillan), p. 283.

to bar the roads to Paris, and a break-away from the British Army seemed to be imminent. Lord Milner (a member of the War Cabinet sent over by Lloyd George to report upon the situation) arrived on the 26th at Doullens, where Clemenceau, Foch, Haig, Henry Wilson and others were assembling for a conference. At that conference Milner took the responsibility of accepting, on behalf of the British Government, a proposal to rely upon Foch to retrieve the desperate situation. Foch was given by Clemenceau and Milner powers to co-ordinate the efforts of the French and British Armies. By April 4th he had exercised his personal influence over various commanders to such good effect that the enemy's advance was definitely arrested, on the line from Arras to the River Oise, and touch between the French and the British Armies was maintained.

The British Army was destined to face another desperate experience. The German offensive in Picardy (First Battles of the Somme 1918)—the heaviest and most formidable attack in the history of warfare—died down on April 5th. Between the 6th and 9th, the enemy advanced from Chauny to the Oise-Aisne Canal, and on the 9th launched another heavy attack (Battles of the Lys) against the British front, part of which was occupied by a Portuguese

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division, just about to be relieved in the front line. By April 11th the Germans had taken the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge and the outskirts of Armentières and Merville. On the 12th the situation seemed almost hopeless and Haig issued his famous order, beginning with praise and encouragement: "Words fail me to express the admiration which I feel for the splendid resistance offered by all ranks of our Army," and proceeding with the historic appeal: "With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight on to the end." (On the 8th the question of recalling Haig had been discussed by the British War Cabinet.¹) Givenchy was held, and Hazebrouck, an important railway centre, was saved. On the 14th Foch was given the title of "Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies" in France and Flanders, with power to direct their strategical movements, but not their tactical handling. Reinforcements of French troops, which now began to arrive, were sent northward and they helped to check the enemy south of Ypres, but in the Battle of the Lys heavy pressure was kept up by the enemy and the situation was critical until April 29th. From thenceforward the enemy's

¹ *Biography of the late Marshal Foch*, by Sir George Aston, p. 212.

attacks were directed elsewhere. The British Army had undergone a terrible ordeal. It suffered about 303,000 battle casualties in March and April, including over 28,000 killed. Foch, determined to form an Allied reserve for future use, had refused many appeals for more French reinforcements. His confidence in the endurance of Haig's sorely tried army to hold out to the very last, was not misplaced.

During this period a crisis occurred in Anglo-French relationship. The enemy made the most of the successes that he had achieved by the tremendous blows against the British, and the ordeal of the French Army was yet to come. Influenced no doubt by hostile propaganda, French criticism of the British Army was freely expressed, but Haig loyally responded to Foch's appeal to transfer some of his tired and depleted divisions (IXth Corps) to rest (?) in the French section. They arrived there in time to help their French comrades in arms when, on May 27th, the Germans launched a massed attack in the Soissons area, penetrating 15 kilometres into the French line on that day, crossing the Aisne on an 18-mile front on the 28th, and by the 31st reaching the line of the River Marne from Château-Thierry to Dormans. During the next two days a violent battle developed on the River Ourcq, but the tide was stemmed. French

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and American troops (now arriving in the front line) drove the enemy back. This "Third Battle of the Aisne" died down by June 6th. On April 27th some Italian troops had begun to arrive on the French front.

On June 9th to 14th (Battle of the Matz) the Germans attacked on the Noyon-Montdidier front, but their progress was arrested. Foch, though sorely harassed by timid counsels in high place, remained calm and confident. He adhered steadfastly to his policy of holding the front line as thinly as possible so as to build up a reserve with which to hit back as soon as opportunity offered. So far the enemy still held the initiative. The chance had not yet arrived. On June 16th Foch conceived the idea of a limited attack eastward in order to bring the Soissons railway junction under artillery fire. That idea grew into a project which was destined to produce momentous results. His reserves were distributed between Château-Thierry and Lens with the majority behind the French left and the British right. He expected the Germans to strike southward in Champagne on July 14th. He kept his plan secret. The British expected to be attacked by enemy reserves under Prince Rupprecht which were within close striking distance of their front. Foch asked Haig to send more of his divisions

to the French front. On July 13th Lloyd George wrote to Clemenceau to point out the weak and exposed position of the British Army. On the 14th General Smuts visited Haig at his Headquarters and promised him the support of the War Cabinet if he refused to comply to Foch's appeal. Haig replied, in writing:

"I take the risk; and I fully realise that, if the dispositions of Foch prove to be wrong, the blame will rest on me. On the other hand, if they prove to be right, the credit will rest with Foch. With this the Government should be well satisfied."¹

Foch had asked Haig on the 13th to send four divisions and a Corps Headquarters with the French front, their entrainment to begin at 2 p.m. on the 14th. Haig complied with the XXIInd Corps, and wrote a letter to ask the reasons for Foch's change of view about the situation. The Germans did not attack on the 14th, as Foch had expected. The situation became tense until, early on the 15th, they advanced southward on both sides of Rheims and so launched the Fourth Battle of Champagne. East of Rheims they were held up by Gouraud's army. West of it they made some progress across the Marne between the 15th and 18th. Foch met Haig on the 15th and

¹ *The World Crisis* (Churchill), Part II, p. 499.

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then gave him, for the first time, an inkling of his plan. On the 17th he told him the whole secret. On the 18th he opened the "Second Battle of the Marne." He launched against the western face of the Château-Thierry salient the reserve of fresh divisions which he had gradually built up, under the command of Mangin.

The Second Battle of the Marne wrested the initiative from the German Army. 20,000 prisoners and 400 guns were taken by July 20th. The enemy's retirement north of the Marne was in full swing by July 27th. Soissons was retaken on August 2nd. The Allies were on the right bank of the River Vesle on August 4th. The battle was over on the 7th. Then Haig struck. The 8th of August has been called by Ludendorff "The Day of Mourning of the German Army." To the events of that day he attributed the defection of Bulgaria in September and the discouragement of Germany's other allies. The British Fourth Army (Rawlinson) with a French corps on its right, struck eastward from Amiens the first decisive blow of a battle, lasting for nearly a month, from which the German Army was never allowed a chance of recovery. The long, weary years of static warfare were over.

From thenceforward, triumph followed

triumph in rapid succession. On August 8th complete surprise was achieved in front of Amiens. Australians and Canadians, aided by 400 tanks and a creeping artillery barrage, carried all before them in the first rush. The battle on that front lasted till the 11th, when resistance to Rawlinson began to harden. 22,000 prisoners and 400 guns were taken in the Battle of Amiens. Byng's Third Army, with the Fourth Army on the left, then struck towards Bapaume, which was taken by New Zealanders on the 29th. The First and Second Armies, further to the northward in Flanders, pressed the retreating foe. Bailleul was entered on the 30th and the commanding position of Mount Kemmel, from which the French had been driven in April, was evacuated by the enemy on the 31st. The whole German line, as far southward as the Aisne, was driven back. The Australians during the night of August 31st/September 1st took Mount St. Quentin, and held that position against counter-attacks of five German divisions, thus compelling the evacuation of Peronne. Twenty-three British divisions took in the "Battle of Bapaume" 34,000 prisoners and 270 guns in ten days. During the month of August (Battles of Amiens, 8th to 15th; Second Battles of the Somme, 21st onwards; and of Arras, 26th

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onwards) nearly 77,000 prisoners were taken on the British front extending from Mercken to Castel, and the enemy's losses in guns and in battle casualties were proportionally heavy. Haig's army suffered over 122,000 casualties during the month, including over 22,000 killed. In spite of the heavy losses in March and April the total strength of Haig's army had stood at nearly 1,900,000 on August 1st, and it exceeded that figure by about 16,000 a month later. For these results Haig owed much to the constant appeals that were made by Clemenceau and by Foch to the British Government to reinforce him. Sir Henry Wilson, who had replaced Robertson as Chief of the General Staff in February, told Foch personally as late as August 11th that the British Army might soon be reduced to 40 or 43 divisions in place of the 59 to 61 for the maintenance of which Foch constantly pressed.¹ There was a strong desire in some quarters that American troops should bear more share in the burden of sacrifice.

The decisive successes which had been gained in August enabled Foch by September 3rd to form plans for the next stage of the colossal battle. These were (1) for the British Army, supported on its right by the left of the French

¹ Wilson: *Diaries*, Vol. II, p. 121.

Army, to strike in the direction of St. Quentin-Cambrai; (2) for the centre of the French Armies to drive the enemy back, beyond the rivers Aisne and Aislette; (3) for the American Army to attack the enemy in the S. Mihiel salient to clear the Paris-Metz railway; and ultimately to strike towards Mezières with their right on the Meuse and their left supported by the French Fourth Army.¹

The British First Army broke through the strong "Drocourt-Quéant switch" line, south of the Scarpe, on September 2nd. Foch called upon Haig on September 8th and in a few minutes an agreement was arrived at for the British Army to attack the famous "Hindenburg line," considered by the Germans to be impregnable after years of work upon dug-outs, obstacles, and shelters. Foch's actual words were: "You will do it. There is nothing that the British Army cannot do," and Haig agreed.² On the 9th Foch saw King Albert of the Belgians and put forward a scheme for him to command a combined advance by British (Second Army), Belgian and French troops towards Bruges to cut off the Germans on the coast and so to enforce their retreat. On September 12th the Americans began to clear

¹ *Biography of the late Marshal Foch*, p. 252.

² *Ibid.*, p. 253.

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the S. Mihiel salient. The British "Battles of the Hindenburg line" began on September 12th and continued until October 9th. The French and American Battles of the Champagne and Argonne began on September 26th and lasted until October 15th. The advance of King Albert's force (Battle of Ypres, 1918) began on September 28th and ended on October 2nd.

The event which finished the war in 1918 was the success of the British Empire Army (to which two American divisions were attached) in piercing the Hindenburg line. Between noon on September 28th and noon on the 29th a million British shell of 3 to 15 inches calibre (costing nearly £4,000,000) fell in the German lines and nothing could stop the advancing infantry and tanks. "By the night of September 30th the Hindenburg line on a front of 25 miles was blasted and pierced to an average depth of 7 miles, and 36,500 prisoners and 380 guns were reported to Sir Douglas Haig."¹ The victory had not been gained without sacrifice. During September and the first nine days of October Haig's armies suffered 140,200 battle casualties, including 6,500 officers, but the pressure was maintained upon the enemy.

When the Hindenburg line was broken Luden-

¹ *World Crisis*, Part II, p. 536.

dorff proposed at a conference at Spa, to approach President Wilson with an appeal to stop hostilities. On October 1st Hindenburg demanded that the request for an armistice should be made the next morning. The appeal was made by the Imperial Chancellor on October 4th. The process of establishing communication between the defeated German Army and its conquerors through the German Chancellor and President Wilson, instead of by the usual method, a direct appeal to the victorious Generalissimo in the field, caused nineteen days' delay and unnecessary fighting after the German cause became hopeless. The convergent attacks of the Allied Armies in September had been made on a frontage of 350 kilometres. King Albert's Allied Force in the Battle of Ypres, and the French and Americans in the Battles of the Argonne and of Champagne, had all made some progress against opposition. Foch told his staff that he felt that the enemy's plight had now become "infernal," and his favourite phrase now was "Everyone to the battle!" He was determined to give the enemy no chance of recuperation.

On October 2nd the Germans fell back on a wide front north and south of the La Bassée Canal. The British took Armentières, the French St. Quentin. On the 3rd the British were in Le Catelet. Fifty-five German aeroplanes were

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shot down, trying to cover their retreating troops. On the 4th resistance stiffened on the Cambrai-St. Quentin front, and the Germans began to remove their heavy guns from the Belgian coast. The French and the Americans advanced in the Argonne country. By October 10th Cambrai had fallen to the British and also Le Cateau. Foch called the Cambrai battle a "hammer-blow," and, lest the impression may have been conveyed that the British Army had a walk-over in the Battles of the Hindenburg line, we can here again take note that, up to October 9th, its battle casualties had numbered 140,200. Nevertheless the pressure was constantly sustained.

King Albert's force gained another 5 miles on October 14th. On the 16th British troops were in part of Courtrai. On the 17th ("Battle of the Selle") British and American troops were across the River Selle. The British took Douai and Lille. The King and Queen of the Belgians were at Ostend. On the 19th Belgian troops occupied Zeebrugge and Bruges. On the 22nd the British were in Valenciennes and they launched a strong attack on the Valenciennes-Le Cateau front on the next day. British and French troops were 10 miles east of Courtrai on the 25th, and they continued their advance on the 26th.

On October 27th Ludendorff resigned. According to his own subsequent showing, he had secured control over German home and foreign policy in the autumn of 1917. He had used it to lead his country to disaster. On the same day the Austrians asked for an armistice, which was signed on November 3rd, Bulgaria having forsaken the hopeless cause of the Central Powers on September 27th and Turkey on October 30th.)

By November 3rd the Germans, pressed by the French, were clear of the Argonne Forest, and in Flanders they were driven back to Ghent. On the 4th Haig's First, Third and Fourth Armies struck another great blow on a 30-mile front, extending from the Scheldt near Valenciennes to beyond the Sambre-Oise Canal. The Allied advance continued on all fronts, and successes were reported all along the line on the 5th. The British took the Mormal Forest, with its memories of the Retreat from Mons in August 1914. On Pétain's front French troops were in Château Porcien on the Aisne and in Guise on the Oise, and were crossing the canal between the Aisne and the Meuse. The Americans, crossing the Meuse, took Beaumont. Foch was now (November 5th) entrusted with the supreme strategical direction of all forces operating against Germany on all fronts.

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On November 6th German delegates left Berlin for their enemy's lines to ask for an armistice. We shall follow them in due course. Allied pressure was maintained. On the 6th the British thrust forward towards Mons, Maubeuge and Avesnes. Between the Oise and the Aisne the French took Vervin and Rethel. The Americans occupied Sedan, of historic memory. The French were on the outskirts of Hirson and Mezières on November 8th. French and Americans had cleared the high ground east of the Meuse, and the British had reached the outskirts of Tournai, having taken Condé by crossing the Scheldt Canal. They took Tournai the next day, and the French took Hirson. Before dawn on November 11th Canadians were in Mons, the scene of the first conflict between the little British Expeditionary Force (the "Old Contemptibles") and Kluck's overwhelming army in August 1914. At 11 a.m. on that day the Armistice, granted by Foch to the German delegates, came into force.

The train containing the delegates (Erzberger, Obendorff, Winterfeldt, and Vanselow—the last two representing the Army and Navy) had arrived in the Compiègne Forest near Réthonde early on November 9th, where Foch's train, with Foch and Weygand representing the

Allied Armies and Wemyss (First Sea Lord) with Hope (his Deputy) representing the Navies, had awaited them since the previous evening. After Foch had dictated the terms under which an Armistice would be granted, he issued to his Allied Armies his last operation order :

“The enemy, disorganised by our repeated attacks, is giving ground on all the fronts. It is necessary to keep up and to quicken our action. I call upon the energy and initiative of the Commanders-in-Chief and of their armies to render decisive the results that have been obtained.”

After referring to Berlin, the German delegates signed the terms at 5.15 a.m. on Monday, November 11th. At 7 a.m. Foch left for Paris, where he handed the document to President Poincaré, saying to Clemenceau, who was present, “My work is finished. Your work begins.” At 11 the persistent gun-fire of the past four and a half years ceased along the whole battle-line. An impressive silence ensued.

Up to the time of the Armistice over 2,700,000 casualties, including nearly 33,000 officers and 528,000 other ranks killed in action or died of wounds or disease, had represented the sacrifice offered by the British Army to the victory that was gained on the “Western Front” in France and Flanders. The battle casualties (not taking

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account of heavy casualties from sickness, especially in the Mesopotamia and Salonika areas) in other campaigns amounted to about 760,000 during the same period.

Having traced the great Armageddon with its holocaust of slaughter to its conclusion, we will now take account of the military operations on other theatres of war in 1918. On the Italian front, some American troops had arrived in June 30th to be added to the French and British reinforcements. Excepting for a short battle on the Piave (June 15th to 24th), that front was quiet until October 24th, when, the German main army having been decisively defeated in the main theatre, the Italians advanced in a final offensive (Battle of Vittoria Veneto, October 24th to November 4th). British troops with the Tenth Italian Army, commanded by Lord Cavan, were the first to cross the Piave. Trieste was occupied by the Italians on November 3rd and an armistice was granted to Austria-Hungary on the same day.

In the Balkan theatre on the Salonika front the result of the British Battle of Doiran (September 18th to 19th) and the Allied "Battle of Monastir-Doiran" (September 18th to 24th) were followed by the Bulgarian surrender, already mentioned. An armistice with Bulgaria was signed on the 30th, and hostilities

then ceased on that front. On November 1st the Serbians had regained their capital, Belgrade.

In some Franco-Italian operations in Albania the Italians took Berat on July 10th, lost it, and re-took it on October 1st. They took Elbasan on October 7th, Durazzo, Novi Bazar and Ipek on the 14th, San Giovanni de Medua on the 29th, and Scutari on the 31st.

In Hungary, an independent government was established at Budapest on November 2nd. Hungary, having secured an armistice on the 15th, proclaimed her independence on the 16th.

On the Eastern Front hostilities between Germany and Russia were resumed on February 18th. Peace with the Bolshevik Government was signed on March 3rd, but the Germans took Odessa on the 12th to 14th, Sevastopol on April 30th to May 1st. In the extreme North British and Allied troops landed by request of anti-Bolshevik authorities at Murmansk on June 23rd and at Archangel on August 1st, the primary object at the time being to deny the coast to German submarines.

Finland had become independent on January 2nd, the Ukraine on February 1st. Finland made peace with Germany on March 7th, and on the 9th the Ukraine made peace with the Central Powers. German troops took Kiev on

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March 3rd and advanced through the Ukraine between March 17th and 28th. On April 1st they sent to Finland an expeditionary force which took Helsingfors on April 12th to 14th. On the 13th the Finnish Government in power announced that the landing had been at their request. A civil war between "Reds" and "Whites" in Finland came to an end on May 7th in favour of the White Guards.

Peace between Rumania and the Central Powers was signed on May 7th, but on November 10th, the eve of the Armistice with Germany, Rumania claimed by royal proclamation to have re-entered the war.

The German successes in subsidiary theatres, enumerated above, were of no avail when the issue was determined against her main army on the Western Front, and the favourable terms which she had exacted from her defeated opponents were all rendered nugatory. Here we are again reminded of Napoleon's saying that there were many good generals in Europe, but they saw too many things at a time, while he saw only the enemy's masses, knowing that if he destroyed them all minor questions would settle themselves. The defection of Russia from the Allied cause was reflected in the Eastern Black Sea, Caucasian and Persian areas and in Mesopotamia. In Western Persia, Qasr-

i-Shin was taken by a British force on January 8th, and Kirman-shah on February 25th.

A British force under Dunsterville left Baghdad on January 27th and arrived at Enzeli on February 17th. The Russian troops left on April 1st, leaving the British with that naval base on the Caspian. (See Naval Operations.) On August 4th a British force landed at Baku and defended it against the Turks from August 26th to September 14th, when it was withdrawn. Baku was captured by the Turks on the next day, and it remained in their hands until November 17th, when it was reoccupied by the British.

Trebizond was taken by the Turks on February 24th and Erzeroum on March 12th. They took Sarikamish in the Caucasus on April 4th, Van in Armenia on the 5th, Batum (the Black Sea end of the oil-pipe line from Baku) on the 15th, Kars in Georgia on the 27th, Alexandropol on May 18th. On June 8th Georgia and the Armenian National Council signed a Peace with Turkey. German troops were landed at Poti in Georgia on the 9th, and Tiflis was occupied by the Germans on the 12th.

In Mesopotamia, Hit on the Euphrates was taken by the British on March 9th, Ana on the 28th. On July 20th the British defended Resht (in Northern Persia). On October 23rd

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they began an advance on Mosul and fought the Battle of Shargat on October 28th to 30th. They heard the news of the Armistice with Turkey on November 1st, and occupied Mosul on the 4th. By November 10th all Turkish forces had withdrawn from the Mosul Vilayet.

The offensive by Allenby in Palestine against the Turks—which the British War Cabinet had hoped to substitute in 1918 for concentration against the Germans on the Western Front—was launched on September 19th, whilst the Battles of the Hindenburg line were proceeding, but ten days before the line had been pierced. During the acute crisis in France and Flanders in March and April, Allenby had been called upon to send reinforcements immediately to the decisive point, but Indian troops had been substituted. Admirably organised and skilfully conducted, Allenby's campaign in Palestine and Syria afforded many valuable lessons for students of military operations under such conditions.

7 In the Battle of Megiddo (September 19th to 25th) the Turks were decisively defeated. It was followed by the capture of Haifa, Acre and Es Salt. On the Eastern flank, where friendly Arab forces were of great value, the Hedjaz railway was cut by cavalry at Ammam on September 25th. Pursuit of the Turks through Syria followed. Cut off by cavalry and bombed

continuously by British aircraft, they became a disorganised rabble, incapable of further resistance. Damascus was reached by British and Arab forces simultaneously on October 1st. Sidon on the coast by the British on the 6th. Beirut by French landing parties on the 7th. Tripoli on the 13th. On the 15th British cavalry were in Homs, on the 26th in Aleppo, and on the 28th at Muslimiya Junction, north of Aleppo, threatening the communications of the Turks in Mesopotamia. An armistice was granted to Turkey on the 30th and hostilities ceased on the 31st, twenty-seven days after the German Chancellor had appealed to President Wilson to intervene at the urgent request of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. The Allied Fleets entered the Dardanelles on November 12th. They anchored off Constantinople on the next day, two years too late to affect, through Russia, the situation at the decisive point.

The year 1918 had opened in anxiety for the fortunes of the Allied Powers on land. It ended with consummate achievement surpassing all their hopes. In the presence of events so momentous in the principal theatres, the happenings elsewhere seem now to us to have been of little account.

In East Africa the German force reached its southern limit near Quelimane on July 1st to

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3rd. In September it re-crossed the Rovuma into German territory. On November 1st it entered Rhodesia and took Kasama on the 9th. On the 13th news reached it, while on the Chambesi River, of the Armistice. On the 25th it surrendered at Abercorn.

In Arabia there was an affair at Imad, near Aden, on October 22nd.

Near the frontier of Afghanistan, Merv was taken by Russian Bolsheviks on August 18th, and retaken by a British force on November 1st.

In far-away Siberia, Japanese and British troops landed (see Naval Operations) at Vladivostok on April 5th. Omsk was occupied by Czecho-Slovak released prisoners on June 7th, Irkutsk on July 13th, Kazan (East Russia) on the 14th. British troops landed at Vladivostok on August 3rd, and Japanese on the 11th. The Czecho-Slovaks on the 13th declared war against Germany. Khabarovsk was taken by the Japanese on September 5th, and Blagovyeschensk on the 18th. The British troops from Vladivostok reached Irkutsk on October 14th, and Omsk (destined to be the scene of a counter-revolution under Koltchak) on October 18th.

In so short a history it is not possible to follow further the fortunes of the British and Allied forces in Siberia or in Archangel, Murmansk, and other parts of Russia after the

date of the Armistice with Germany which settled the main issue.

The War in the Air, 1918

Until the year 1918 British activities in the air were conducted by members of the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps as flying seamen or soldiers. On January 2nd 1918 an Air Ministry was established, and the Air Board, dating from 1916, which had performed useful functions in connexion with the separate flying forces, was abolished on the following day. On April 1st the naval and military air services were amalgamated to form the Royal Air Force, so a favourable opportunity is now offered for reviewing the independent operations conducted in the air by the R.N.A.S. and the R.F.C. up to April 1st 1918 and by the Independent Force, R.A.F., after that date.

Mention has been made of certain bombing raids by the R.N.A.S. during the years 1914 and 1915 on Cuxhaven, Dusseldorf and Friedrichshaven. In the autumn of 1917 three squadrons of the R.F.C. were based at a point near Nancy to operate against centres containing German iron and chemical industries. Owing to urgent demands of the Army, that force was too small to produce effective results. Within a month of the establishment of the R.A.F. it

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had been increased to 10 squadrons. The effect was to compel the Germans to recall 20 or more fighting squadrons from Army co-operation, and to set apart a large number of troops to man anti-aircraft defences. The policy thus adopted provided a useful set-off against the loss of British machines and man-power from co-operation with the Army on the Western Front, due to the need to defend the United Kingdom from German aid-raiders. At the date of the Armistice in November 1918 arrangements had been made to increase the Independent Force, R.A.F., to a total of 48 squadrons by the following May, and judging from contemporary statements in the German Press and other sources of information about the effect produced by 10 squadrons in the summer of 1918, it is within the range of possibility that, with a demoralised army in full retreat, the German Government would have been compelled by a British bombing-force, increased fourfold, to sue for peace within a few weeks, even if the dictated terms of the Armistice had been rejected, and without any need for the Allies to exert further the military pressure which the Generalissimo was ready to apply. This, however, comes within the realm of conjecture.

Apart from co-operation with the Allied Armies, such as a service rendered to Marshal

Foch by informing him of the general movement southward of the German bivouac fires which preceded the thrust southward on July 15th, west of Rheims (which was taken in flank by the Mangin attack of July 18th), considerable effects were produced in other spheres.

By the end of October 18 squadrons were stationed in the United Kingdom. They had had much to do with the immunity from attacks by aeroplanes from July and by airships from August onwards. The first German aeroplane raid upon London on a moonless night occurred on March 7th, causing 60 civilian and 2 soldier casualties. On April 12th an airship raid on midland counties caused 27 casualties, all civilians. May 18th was the date of the first retaliatory raid on Cologne, by daytime. The last casualties (226, mostly civilian) from an aeroplane raid on England (London, Kent and Essex) were inflicted on May 19th. Seven planes were brought down and three crashed on their way back out of 36 that were employed. On the same night British camps and hospitals at Etaples were bombed. June 5th was the date of the constitution under Sir Hugh Trenchard of the Independent Air Force. An unsuccessful (the last) attempt was made by German aeroplanes to conduct another raid upon English towns on July 20th, and the last attempt by airships on

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August 5th, when L.70 was destroyed. For the whole war, the total number of German air-raids in which bombs were dropped was 110, of which 59 were made by aeroplanes and 51 by airships.¹ While these events, broadly speaking, produced exasperation and determination to see the war to a successful conclusion rather than the terror and surrender anticipated by its originators, their effect was to slow down the production of munitions to an appreciable extent, and also to compel the authorities to employ in the United Kingdom air and artillery material, and a numerous personnel which could have been more effectively employed in offensive operations. (German airship-raiders killed 498 civilians and 58 members of the fighting forces during the war. They injured 1,236 civilians and 12 members of the fighting forces. German aeroplanes killed 619 civilians and 238 of the fighting forces. They injured 1,650 civilians and 400 soldiers and sailors. 281 women and children were killed and 649 injured by the airships, 337 were killed and 909 injured by the aeroplanes. Losses were gradually reduced as protective measures forced the assailants into higher and higher strata of the atmosphere.²)

Great Britain began the war with a total of

¹ *List of Principal Events* (official), p. 75. Footnote.

² *British Military Effort*, p. 674.

272 aeroplanes and seaplanes, with a personnel of 197 officers and 1,647 other ranks. By October 1918 the number of machines had risen to 22,171 (37,702 engines) with 27,906 officers and 263,842 other ranks. Without including the R.N.A.S. up to April 1918, the total casualties suffered in the British air services during the war (killed, wounded, missing, prisoners and interned) reached a total of 16,714, including 12,874 officers. The distribution of these casualties in 1918 gives some measure of world-wide activities. In France the number of officer-casualties reached 4,795, of other ranks 786. In the Middle East the numbers were 296 and 60 respectively; in Italy, 141 and 15; in Canada, 79 and 197; and in Great Britain, 2,057 and 1,185. The total for the war in officer-casualties in Great Britain (3,373) gives some indication of the sacrifice of life, whilst learning to fly, amongst adventurous youth, few of whom had reached man's estate, when inspired by their country's most urgent necessity. While the record of the British Navy and Army dates far back in the history of the nation, such are the traditions which the Royal Air Force, established in April 1918, inherited from its predecessors of the earlier years of the most colossal conflict to which the life of the Empire and all for which it stands have ever been subjected.

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Political, Economic and Financial Conditions, 1918

In 1918, the *annus mirabilis* of the war, all eyes were turned to the men of action upon whose deeds the great issues depended, especially upon the armies at death-grips on the soil of France and Flanders where the enemy seemed to be on the brink of success until July and August. Then the culminating point was passed¹ and the Allied and associated Armies with their attendant air forces advanced, in a crescendo of triumph, to the final Battle of the Hundred Days.

In the war of words in the political and diplomatic sphere the outstanding character in the Allied Councils was Clemenceau, practically a dictator and one of the few outstanding figures in France who understood the British character. Lloyd George, all-powerful in the British War Cabinet, represented and interpreted with great eloquence the determination of the British nation to hold out at all costs for decisive victory. President Wilson in the United States wielded the autocratic powers, exceeding those of any monarch, which were conferred by the American

¹ *Vide Clausewitz On War*: "Beyond that point there is a reaction: the violence of the reaction is commonly much greater than the force of the blow."

Constitution upon his office in time of war. Remote from emotional impulse and from the ideals and sacrifices of the belligerents, he strove to find intellectual solutions for the problems of suffering humanity.

The French Foreign Minister having, on December 28th, announced the war-aims of his country, Lloyd George on January 5th outlined those of Great Britain in a speech to Trade Union delegates. On the 8th President Wilson, in a message to Congress, laid down his celebrated "Fourteen Points" as essential objects to be attained, and he added four more to them in a further message on February 11th. On January 24th the German Chancellor (Hertling) and Austrian Foreign Minister (Czernin) replied to the President and to Lloyd George in terms bringing peace no nearer. On September 15th, during the Allied Armies' triumphant advance, a different note was struck by Austria in an appeal to the President for an unofficial peace conference (which was rejected on the next day) and by Germany in an offer to Belgium to make peace. (On October 4th, when the Hindenburg line had been broken, Germany and Austria-Hungary proposed to President Wilson an Armistice in circumstances already described. Turkey on October 14th, also in sore straits, followed the example of her predominant partners with an

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appeal to the President, instead of to her conquerors in the field, on the subject of an Armistice, with results no more encouraging. Bulgaria, by a direct appeal to the Entente Powers on September 27th, secured an Armistice promptly on the 30th. Turkey secured one on the same day and hostilities against her ceased on the 31st. An Armistice was granted to Austria-Hungary on November 3rd, and to Germany on November 11th.

During the months that marked what proved to be illusory triumphs against other members of the Entente Alliance, Germany (and her allies) dictated the terms of a preliminary peace with Rumania at Buftea on March 5th. Peace was made final on May 7th, after Rumania, on March 9th, had made peace with Bolshevik Russia. The Central Powers recognised the Ukraine Republic on February 1st and made peace with that State on the 9th. Germany established a military dictatorship there on April 29th and on June 9th an Armistice was contracted between the Ukraine and Bolshevik Russia. Field-Marshal V. Eichhorn was assassinated in Kiev on July 30th. Germany resumed hostilities against Bolshevik Russia on February 18th, but, in conjunction with the Central Power group, she signed a Peace Treaty at Brest-Litovsk on March 3rd. On the 18th the Entente Powers

refused to recognise that Treaty. On June 4th the Cossacks of the Don broke away from their allegiance to Moscow. On July 6th the German Ambassador (Mirbach) at Moscow, and on August 31st the British Naval Attaché (Cromie) at Petrograd were murdered by Bolsheviks. On July 16th the ex-Tsar Nicholas II and his family were murdered by Bolsheviks at Ekaterinburg under conditions of great brutality. In the territories which were originally covered by Tsarist Russia, the independence of Finland was recognised on January 4th. On the 10th the British Government assured the Bolshevik Government of its support in creating an independent Poland. Latvia proclaimed independence on the 12th, Estonia on the 13th.

The Bolsheviks dissolved the Russian Constituent Assembly on January 19th, after it had met for one day. General Alexiev, with a force of Cossacks of the Don, moved towards Moscow on February 4th. He was defeated decisively on the 13th. A military convention was signed at Dobruisk between Germany and Poland on February 25th, and a Treaty of Amity between a Finnish (Red) republic and Bolshevik Russia on March 1st. Germany proclaimed a Protectorate over Courland on March 15th, and on April 13th the United Diets of the Baltic Provinces passed a resolution to join the German

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Empire as a separate State. The Moldavian Republic (Bessarabia) passed an Act of Union, with local autonomy, with Rumania on April 9th. A protest from the Ukraine followed on the 16th, and on the 23rd the Bolsheviks also issued a protest. Trans-Caucasia had declared her independence on the 22nd.

Finland made peace with Germany on March 7th, with Turkey on May 11th, and with Austria on the 29th. A Trans-Caucasian Federal Government was dissolved on May 26th. Georgia proclaimed independence on the same day, and contracted Peace Treaties with Germany and Turkey on June 8th. Siberia claimed independence on July 4th, but cancelled the claim on the 6th. At Vladivostok a new Government was formed on July 10th by General Horvat, who executed a *coup d'état* there on August 24th. The British Government on August 6th issued a Declaration to the Russian peoples that it did not intend to interfere with Russian politics. (Entente forces had occupied Archangel on August 2nd. See above.)

On September 12th the British Government recognised the autonomy of the Polish National Army as a co-belligerent ally, and on November 1st Poland was at war with the Ukraine. A new National Council was formed in Estonia on November 11th.

Thus, in a welter of confusion and collapse, ended the Russian Empire whose ill-equipped and badly administered armies, with corruption in high places behind them, had faced such heavy sacrifices heroically and had performed such good service to the cause of the Allies during the first three years of the war. In connexion with Germany's military efforts, which contributed to this result, we are here reminded of the writing of Clausewitz, a century earlier, that Russia "can only be subdued by its own weakness, and by the effects of internal dissension. In order to strike these vulnerable points in its political existence, the country must be agitated to its very centre." Germany had done her best to do so in 1917 by facilitating the passage of leading Bolsheviki, headed by Lenin, from Switzerland to Moscow. With the aftermath in later years, as affecting Germany, we are not here concerned. Only a few months were to pass before those who had enforced crushing conditions of peace upon Russia and Rumania were themselves to be subjected to a similar ordeal.

The German delegates to Marshal Foch's coach in the Compiègne Forest on November 9th to 11th were credited by several eye-witnesses with having expressed their terror of Bolshevism in their own Fatherland. On Nov-

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ember 7th Bavaria had broken away, as an independent Republic. On the 9th a revolution had broken out in Berlin itself. The Kaiser had immediately decided to abdicate. On the 10th he fled into Holland, fearing the vengeance of his people. Prince Max of Baden became Regent and Ebert took his place as Chancellor. They were charged with the responsibility for conducting a surrender for which not they, but the military leaders who had seized the political power over a year previously, were directly responsible.

Before her collapse the majority of the human race was at war with Germany. During the final year 1918 Gautemala had been added to her enemies on April 23rd, Nicaragua on May 8th, Costa Rica on the 23rd, Haiti on July 12th, and Honduras on the 19th.

The disintegration of Austria-Hungary and of the House of Hapsburg dating from the eleventh century, forms an equally tragic tale. The old Emperor Francis Joseph had passed away in November 1916. His successor, the Emperor Charles, a monarch of high character, born under an evil star, had made overtures for peace to France as early as March 1917. On October 16th 1918 he proclaimed a Federal State, on the principle of Nationality. On the 31st he made over the fleet to the Yugo-Slav National

Council. Revolutions broke out in Vienna and Budapest on the same day. An independent Hungarian Government was formed on November 1st. On November 12th the Emperor abdicated.

The tale of the disintegration remains to be told. The Czecho-Slovaks (Bohemia) signed a Treaty with Italy on June 30th. They declared war upon Germany on August 13th and they were recognised as an allied Nation by Great Britain on the same day. On October 21st they declared their independence of the Austrian Empire.

The Southern Slavs rallied round Serbia. An agreement between the Yugo-Slavs and Italy was reached on April 10th. On June 29th the United States Government expressed their view that all Slav races should be freed from German and Austrian rule. Italy, on September 25th, recognised the Yugo-Slav State as independent, and on October 5th Yugo-Slav delegates met at Agram to form a United National Council. On October 29th that Council declared the independence of the Yugo-Slavs, to which declaration the Croats adhered on the 30th through the medium of their Congress. The Slovenes (Carniola) had formed a National Council on August 17th. They too broke away on November 2nd. King Peter of Serbia, destined to reign over all

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the Yugo-Slavs, re-entered his capital at Belgrade on November 6th, and a conference met at Geneva on the 7th to form a Yugo Slav-Serbian Government.

In Bulgaria the shrewd King Ferdinand, who had overreached himself by misjudging the military situation and by relying upon a German victory, resigned his throne in favour of his son Boris, who in his turn abdicated on November 1st.

On the borders of Turkey-in-Asia, a Tatar National Council established on May 26th a "Republic of Azerbaijan," and on the same day the Armenian National Council assumed charge of Armenian affairs.

These political events, all over the world, were influenced by the failure of the German Army to pierce the thin British line in front of Amiens in March, by Foch's counter-stroke of July 18th, and by Haig's great blows of which the first was struck in front of Amiens on August 8th.

In England the Third Military Service Act, raising the age limit for compulsory service to 50, and extending conscription to Ireland, was passed on April 10th. It came into force on the 18th. On May 25th the British Government published an account of Irish-German plots, and the Government deemed it wise not to call upon

the Irish to follow the example of their compatriots in the United States of America by subjecting themselves to this sacrifice to destroy the Prussian militarist class and all that it represented. Official estimates¹ show that the percentage of the male population in England who were in the Army was 24·02 per cent, in Scotland 23·71, in Wales 21·52, in New Zealand 19·35, in Canada 13·48 (of the population born in Canada or in the British Isles), in Australia 13·43, in the Union of South Africa 11·12, and in Ireland 6·14. The figures for the United Kingdom are calculated on a basis of total male population; for Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa on the estimated white male population. In the United Kingdom the number of women engaged at the end of the war in national services other than nursing and munitions was about 305,000 and an additional 5,000,000 were engaged in over 1,700 different kinds of employment usually performed by men.²

From matters affecting directly the spirit of the peoples and of the fighting services we pass to the British Empire economic efforts that were needed to obtain the victory. The effect of food-supplies upon the morale of the nations behind the fleets, armies and air-forces became

¹ *Statistics of British Military Effort*, p. 263.

² *The Nations of To-day*, Vol. I, p. 262.

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an important consideration. In the third week in February 1918, when German submarines had taken their toll of British merchant ships and many of the remainder were in use, for Army purposes or helping Allies, nearly 1,400,000 people were counted standing in food-queues outside London shops. When a compulsory rationing scheme in London for meat, butter and margarine was introduced on February 15th, the number fell at once to 191,000, and the experience was the same nearly everywhere. The 550,000 to be seen in food-queues in London before rationing dropped to 7,000 in the fourth week after its introduction. The effect of rationing was instantaneous, but it was not until July 18th 1918 that a comprehensive national scheme of rationing meat, butter, margarine, sugar, lard, and (later) jam was introduced and administered all over the country by local food committees under the Food Controller and Ministry of Food. Food prices were controlled from July 1917. Had this step not been taken, the rise of price from pre-war level of essential foodstuffs would probably have reached 150 per cent by October 1918 instead of 115 per cent, the actual figure. A bread subsidy also tended to some extent to keep down the general price. The consumption of bread per head per week rose from 6.12 lbs. to 6.57 lbs. in the United

Kingdom. It fell from 6.44 lbs. to 4.06 lbs. in Germany. Before the war the corresponding weekly consumption of meat in the United Kingdom was $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., it fell to 1.54 lbs. The figures for Germany were 2.25 lbs. and .49 respectively.

For stocks of food in the United Kingdom the year which began on September 1st 1915 was critical. When control was applied a steady increase occurred and in the corresponding months of 1916-1917 the amounts rose rapidly. The same occurred in 1917-1918, excepting that the amount of fats steadily declined. By September 1918, when the submarine menace had been averted, the general level of stocks had risen to a high enough point to remove all anxiety about the approaching winter.

The favourable food situation (as soon as some approach to equitable distribution was achieved) depended entirely upon the activities of the British Royal and Mercantile Navies. With the former we have dealt, and we can now turn to the contribution made by British merchant shipping to the Allied cause in the course of the war. First of all, about 500 steamers, over 500 tons each, of a total gross tonnage of over 1,500,000, were practically absorbed in the Royal Navy itself as merchant cruisers, minelayers, fleet messengers, patrol ships, colliers, ammuni-

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tion and supply vessels. Then over 220 oil-tankers were used by the Fleet. Adding tugs and small vessels used for mine-sweeping and similar services, the total number of vessels comes up to 1,500, in addition to about 2,400 trawlers.

To perform military services for the British Empire Army an average of 520 ships of over 500 tons, with a total gross tonnage of 1,750,000, were set apart, largely owing to the distance of the theatres of war from home bases.

For help to Allies, France in 1918 had over 1,000,000 tons of British merchant shipping in her service carrying about 45 per cent of France's total imports (50 per cent of a million tons a month of imported coal, and 60 per cent of cereal imports). Italy at the same time used 750,000 tons of British shipping, carrying about 45 per cent of her imports (about 50 per cent of coal and cereals). Up to October in 1918, the number of American troops conveyed to France in British vessels was about 947,000, requiring the sacrifice of 250,000 tons a month of imports to the United Kingdom. Taking all the above, and including the conduct of the vital trade of the Dominions of the Empire, the consequence was that, out of about 15,000,000 tons of British ocean-going shipping, only about 6,250,000 tons were available (aided to some extent by neutral vessels) to carry British imports. The pre-war

total of 54,000,000 tons of imported commodities had dropped in 1918 to about 30,000,000 tons. The pre-war figure of 18,000,000 tons of food dropped in 1918 to 13,000,000, and the import of vast quantities of war material in 1918 lowered the imports of civil supplies to only 3,000,000 tons, compared with the pre-war figure of 36,000,000 tons of raw material for industry and manufactured articles. Without these statistics, though somewhat wearying perhaps to the eye, it would not be possible to realise the nature of the contribution of the Merchant Navy and population to war effort. The loss of life amongst merchant seamen and civilian passengers reached approximately 20,000, compared with 33,000 in the Royal Navy.

There remains the economic effort of the people on shore in the British Empire. On this it is out of the question to quote details. After deducting the 6,250,000 or so men withdrawn from civil employment in the United Kingdom to join the fighting forces, and the vast numbers needed for making munitions and essential work for Allies, it was only possible for the remainder to provide for essential needs by economy in consumption, by increasing personal output, and by the help afforded by women. The Empire as a whole rose to the occasion to provide man-power and other assistance, the

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effect being to increase resources and to keep down expenditure.

The figures of effort in finance were too colossal for the understanding of the layman, excepting as comparisons.

Taking expert reports and assuming that about £200,000,000 a year would have been expended by the United Kingdom from the financial year 1914-1915 to 1918-1919 inclusive if there had been no war, the gross total of war expenditure has been put at £8,850,000,000, out of which £1,572,000,000 was raised by increased taxation, £30,000,000 out of increased postal revenue and other sources not taxes, £83,000,000 from cash contributions of Governments overseas, and the remainder by borrowing. The deadweight debt of the United Kingdom rose from £645,000,000 in August 1914 to £7,875,000,000 at the end of the financial year 1918-1919. Of the amount borrowed by Great Britain, about £1,000,000,000 (including accrued interest) came from the United States and is now being repaid at £30,000,000 a year. The general subject of loans to Allies and net financial sacrifice, in which Great Britain stood first, forms a suitable theme for post-war study, rather than for a history of the war itself.

The nature of national wealth, as apart from pure finance, is a subject of controversy upon

which doctors disagree. Some hold that employment in labour is the best comparative test of national prosperity. Judged by that standard the reduction of British prosperity as a result of war-sacrifice has been conspicuous.

Of a war in which Great Britain was engaged a century earlier it was written that rarely has any war been fought with such bitterness which ended without a single one of the original causes of the war affecting the terms of peace.¹ The British Empire in the Great War of 1914-1918 held on regardless of sacrifice until the original object, the freedom of Belgian and of French soil from the invader, had been secured.

Unforeseen results, some of them unwelcome, included the sacrifice of British predominance at sea, the abandonment of British control over Afghan foreign policy, the loss of the sympathy of Egypt—due partly to the enforced participation of Egyptian labour in the Palestine campaign—and the responsibility for administering and defending for many years vast territories in the Middle East and in Africa. The tale of the effect of the economic and financial burdens comes into the story of post-war developments.

While some believed that the strain of sacrifice

¹ *War with the U.S.A., 1812* (Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy), Part I, p. 522.

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caused by external menace would break up the British Empire, the ordeal proved the strength of the "silken bonds" of sympathy with the same ideals and of loyalty to the same Sovereign.

Peace was ultimately concluded on behalf of the British Empire by a "British Empire Delegation," and the terms were signed by representatives of all "His Majesty's Governments" in concert with the allied signatories of the Pact of London (*see* p. 95) with the exception of Russia. Peace between the "Associated" United States of America and Germany was concluded separately in August 1921.

The Peace Treaties of the Allied Powers were signed as follows, and called after the places indicated in brackets: with Germany on June 28, 1919 (Versailles); with Austria on September 10, 1919 (St. Germain); with Bulgaria on November 27, 1919 (Neuilly); with Hungary on June 4, 1920 (Trianon); and with Turkey not until July 24, 1923 (Lausanne), by which date the Turks had had time to recover from their defeat by British Empire troops and to repel a Greek invasion of Asia Minor. From the Appendix which follows an idea can be formed of the stability of the Governments of the Entente alliance in the crises of the war. In the United States of America foreign wars are conducted by the President, acting as a Dictator.

APPENDIX

PRIME MINISTERS OF THE PRINCIPAL ENTENTE COUNTRIES 1914-1918

GREAT BRITAIN.

Asquith

April 1908 to Dec. 1916.

Lloyd George ✓

Dec. 1916.

RUSSIA.

Goremikin

Jan. 1914 to Feb. 1916.

Stürmer

Feb. to Nov. 1916.

Trepov

Nov. 1916 to Jan. 1917.

Golitsin

Jan. to March 1917.

Lvov

March to July 1917.

Kerenski

August 1917.

Lenin ✓

(Dictator)

Nov. 1917.

FRANCE.

Viviani

June 1914 to Oct. 1915.

Briand

Oct. 1915 to March 1917.

Ribot

March to Sept. 1917.

Painlevé

Sept. to Nov. 1917.

Clemenceau ✓

Nov. 1917.

ITALY.

Salandra

March 1914 to June 1916.

Boselli

June 1916 to Oct. 1917.

Orlando ✓

Oct. 1917.

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